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A TRYALL OF THE NEW-CHURCH WAY IN *NEW-ENGLAND* AND IN OLD.

Wherein are handled these Questions following.

1. *Whether a stinted forme of Prayer and set Liturgie be unlawfull.*
2. *Whether it be unlawfull to joyne in Prayer, or receive the Sacraments where a stinted Liturgie is used.*
3. *Whether the children of godly and approved Christians, be not to be baptized till their parents be set-members of some particular Congregation.*
4. *Whether the parents themselves being of approved pietie, ought not to be received to the Lords Supper, untill they be first admitted as set-members.*
5. *Whether the power of Excommunication, &c. be so in the body of the Church, that what the major part shall allow, that must be done, though the Pastors and Governors, and part of the Assembly be of another minde, and peradventure upon more substantiall reasons.*
6. *Whether those that are admitted as set-members, ought not to depart or remove, without the consent of that Congregation whereof they are members.*
7. *Whether a Minister be so a Minister to a particular Congregation, that if they dislike, or leave him, he utterly ceaseth to be a Minister.*
8. *Whether a Minister may not performe ministeriall acts to another Congregation then his owne.*
9. *Whether members of one Congregation, may not communicate in another.*

By that learned and godly Minister of CHRIST,

JOHN BALL, of *Whitmore.*

Penned a little before his death, and sent over to the *New-England* Ministers, *Anno* 1637. As a reply to an Answer of theirs in justification of the said *Positions.*

Now published (by occasion mentioned in the Epistle to the Reader following in the next page) upon the desire of many godly and faithfull Ministers, in and about the Citie of London, *who love and seek the truth.*

By WILLIAM RATHBAND and SIMEON ASH.

1 Thes. 5. 21. *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*

LONDON:
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RPJCB

To the Reader.

Good Reader,

Upon the receipt of the Anſwer returned unto the Nine Poſitions, Maſter *Ball* moved by the requeſt of Brethren, drew up this reply, which upon peruſall and joynt approbation, was directed unto the reverend Elders of the ſeverall Churches in *New England*. The Reply ſent miſcarrying in the hand, to which it was committed, though both Letters and printed Bookes truſted in the ſame hand were delivered: Hereupon another Copie was from *New England* deſired, and accordingly prepared in the yeare following. In the meane time, the Anſwer being tendered to the Preſſe, it was judged more meete to keepe the Reply in readineſſe to attend the publiſhing of the Anſwer, then to part with it in the other way. This intelligence was the laſt yeare conveyed into *New England*, ſince which time, there hath been an expectation to ſee that in Print, which now is ſent abroad to open view. By this Relation it is manifeſt who are voluntiers, and who are preſſed to come forth as defendants in theſe Controverſies. Theſe differences betwixt the loving Brethren of old *England* and New, had not been made thus notorious, if ſome who cry up the Church way in *New England*, as the only way of God, had not been forward, to blow them abroad in the world. But ſurely the providence of God is remarkeable in bringing theſe queſtions into debate at this time, when the Miniſters of the Goſpell from all the Counties in the Kingdome are called together by both houſes of Parliament, to conſult about the healing of our breaches, which are very many and dangerous: The Copie of this Reply being committed to our cuſtodie we are neceſſitated to appeare in the publication of it: yet we ſhall preface nothing concerning the Treatiſe it ſelfe, becauſe our known reſpects to the reverend and judicious Author will render us partiall, and our teſtimony can adde no credit to his works, which withall indifferent Readers will plead ſufficiently for their own acceptance. If this diſcourſe ſhall adde any diſcovery of light unto them, who deſire a ſound judgement in the controverſies here agitated, our end is obtained, and our prayers anſwered, who are.

Thy Servants in and for the truth,
Simeon Aſh,
William Rathband.

The Letter of those Ministers in *England*, who requested to know the judgement of their Brethren in *New England*, in Nine positions, wherein the reasons of this their request, are truly reported.

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(Reverend and beloved Brethren)

WHiles we lived together in the same Kingdome, we professed the same faith, joyned in the same Ordinances, laboured in the worke of God to gaine soules unto his kingdome, and maintained the puritie of worship against corruptions, both on the right hand and on the left. But since your departure into New England, we heare (and partly beleeve it) that divers have embraced certaine vain opinions such as you disliked formerly, and we judge to be groundlesse and unwarrantable. As that a stinted forme of prayer, and set Liturgie is unlawfull; That it is not lawfull to joyne in prayer, or to receive the Sacrament, where a stinted Liturgie is used. 3. That the children of godly and approved Christians are not to be Baptized, untill their parents bee set members of some perticular congregation. 4. that the Parents themselves, though of approved piety are not to be received to the Lords Supper, untill they bee admitted as set members. 5. That the power of Excommunication, &c. is so in the body of the Church, that what the major part shall allow, that must be done, though the Pastors and Governors, and part of the assembly be of another minde, and peradventure, upon more substantiall reasons. 6. That none are to be admitted as set members, but they must promise, not to depart, or remove unlesse the Congregation will give leave. 7. That a Minister is so a Minister to a particular Congregation, that if they dislike him unjustly, or leave him, he ceaseth to be a Minister. 8. That a Minister cannot performe any ministeriall act in another Congregation. 9. That members of one Congregation may not communicate in another.

These and other such like (which we omit to reckon up) are written and reported to be the common Tenents in New England, which are received with great applause, maintained with great confidence, and applauded, as the only Church way, wherein the Lord is to be worshipped. And letters from New England have so taken with divers in many parts of this Kingdome, that they have left our Assemblies because of a stinted Liturgie, and excommunicated themselves from the Lords Supper, because such as are not debarred from it. And being turned aside themselves, they labour to ensnare others, to the griefe of the godly, the scandall of Religion, the wounding of their owne soules (if they did advisedly consider the matter) and great advantage of them, that are wily to espy, and ready to make use of all advantages to prejudice the truth. (Beloved brethren) if you stood in our places, we are well assured it would be no small griefe unto you, to heare and see the people led aside to the disgrace of the Gospell, upon weake and groundlesse imaginations, and in rash and inconsiderate zeale to deale with that which is of God, as if it were of man. And if it be to us griefe of heart to heare that you have changed from

from that truth which you did professe, and embrace that for truth which in former times upon sound grounds you did condemne as erroneous, we hope you will not be offended. You know how oft it hath beene objected that Non-conformists in practice are Separatists in heart, but that they goe crosse to their own positions, or smother the truth for sinister ends. They of the Separation boast that they stand upon the Non-conformists grounds. A vainglorious flourish and sleight pretence. But both these are much countenanced by your sudden change if you be changed, as it is reported. How shall your brethren bee able to stand up in the defence of their innocencie, and the uprightnesse of their cause, when your example and opinion shall be cast in their dish? Must they leave you now, with whom they have held society? Or will you plead for Separation, which you have condemned as rash and inconsiderate? You know that thy who have run this way have fallen into manifold divisions, and may not you justly feare, lest the same befall you? Some warnings you have had already, and have you not cause to feare every day more and more? Errour is very fruitfull and will spread apace. A cracke in the foundation may occasion a wide breach in the building, where there will not be means or mind to amend it. Experience every day may tutour us herein. But to let passe all inconveniences, our request in all meeknesse and love is, that if these, or any of the forementioned opinions be indeed your Tenents, you would be pleased to take a second review of your grounds, and send us your strongest reasons that have swayed you in these matters: and if we shall find them upon due examination to be such as will carry weight, we shall be ready to give you the right hand of fellowship; if otherwise you shall receive our just and modest animadversions in what we conceive you have erred from the truth. You will not judge, if we cannot apprehend the strength of your grounds, it is because we love not the truth, or bee carryed with by-respects (though these conceipts prevaile too much:) Such rigid and harsh censures cannot lodge in meeke and humble breasts. Weighty reasons promote the truth not unadvised judging. You your selves have judged that to be errour, which now you take to be truth when yet you were not blinded with by-respects, nor hudwinked your eyes, that you might not see the light. And if you have just warrant from God to pull downe what you have builded, and to build what you have pulled downe, we desire you would lovingly and maturely impart it. for as yet we have seene none, which we are not ready to prove, and shew by the rule of truth to be too weake to carry any burthen,

We adore with you the fulnesse of the Scripture, and we know the Counsell of the Lord shall stand: if you can shew that you walke in the wayes of God, we shall heartily rejoyce to walke with you: but if you have turned aside, we shall earnestly desire that you would be pleased seriously to consider the matter, and speedily reforme, what is out of order. Thus not doubting of your favourable interpretation of this our motion, for the preventing of distraction, maintenance of peace, and searching out of the truth, whereby we may be directed to live to the praise of God, the good of his people, and comfort of our soules, beseeching God to lead and guide us into all truth and holinesse, and keepe us blamelesse untill his glorious appearance, we rest

Your loving Brethren.

An Epistle written by the Elders of the Churches in NEW-ENGLAND, to those godly Ministers fore-mentioned that sent over the Positions.

Reverend and beloved Brethren:

IN these remote Coasts of the earth, whereunto the good hand of God hath brought us, as we doe with much comfort of heart call to mind the many gracious blessings, which both with you, and from you, we injoyed in our Christian and holy communion, (the memory and fruit whereof we hope shall never be blotted out) so we have also seen cause to looke back to our former administrations there, and to search and trie our wayes; that wherein soever we have formerly gone astray, we might judge our selves for it before the Lord: And that seeing now God hath set before us an open doore of libertie, wee might neither abuse our libertie in the Gospel, to runne out into any groundlesse unwarrantable courses, nor neglect the present opportunitie to administer (by the helpe of Christ) all the holy ordinances of God, according to the patterne set before us in the Scripture; In our native Countrey, when we were first called to the Ministery, many of us tooke some things to be indifferent and lawfull, which in after-times we saw to be sinfull, and durst not continue in the practise of them there; Afterwards some things that we bare as burthens, that is, as things inexpedient though not utterly unlawfull; we have no cause to retain and practise the same things here, which would not have been not onely inexpedient, but unlawfull: such things as a man may tollerate when he cannot remove them, hee cannot tollerate without sinne, when he may remove them; Besides some things we practised there (which wee speak to our shame and griefe) which we never took into serious consideration whether they were lawfull, and expedient or no, but took them for granted, and generally received; not onely by the most Reformed Churches, but by the most godly and judicious servants of God amongst them; which nevertheless when we came to weigh them in the ballance of the Sanctuarie, we could not find sufficient warrant in the Word to receive them, and establish them here: of one of these three kinds will these our present practises appeare to be, which you call our new opinions, or, Innovations here; except it be some few of them, which though they have been reported to you to be our Judgements and practises, yet are indeed farre from

us: The partieulars are too many, and too weightie to give you account of them, and the ground of our proceedings about them in a Letter. But to give you (if it be the will of God) the better ſatisfaction, we have ſent you a ſhort Treatiſe touching each particular, that according to your deſire you might underſtand from us how farre we do acknowledge any of theſe tenents, and upon what ground, hoping that according to your promiſe, if upon due examination you ſhall find any weight in them, you will give us the right hand of fellowſhip. But if otherwiſe, you will ſend us your juſt and faithfull animadverſions, and we doe not ſuſpect your loves to the truth, or your ſincere ſpeaking according to your conſcience in the ſight of God, Neither taxe we you as ſiding from the truth with by-reſpects, whereof you complain, verily we abhorre ſuch raſh, harſh, and preſumptuous notoriouſneſſe, we ſee as much cauſe to ſuſpect the integritie of our own hearts, as yours; and ſo much the more, as being more privie to the deceitfulneſſe of our own hearts then to yours. And we cannot but with much thankfulneſſe of heart acknowledge the many rich precious treaſures of his grace, wherewith the Lord hath furniſhed ſundrie of you above your Brethren, which cauſeth us with great reverence to accept, and receive what further light God may be pleaſed to impart unto us by you; But as we have beleeved, ſo have we hitherto practiſed, and ſo have moſt of us ſpoken this our Anſwer to your particulars, moſt of us we may ſay, becauſe there wants not ſome Brethren amongſt us who proceed further, even to looke at all ſet formes of Prayer invented by men of another age or congregation, and preſcribed to their Brethren to be read out of a book for the prayers of the Church, as Images, or Imaginations of men, forbidden in the ſecond Commandement; But as we leave them to their libertie of their own judgements without prejudice, ſo do we alſo concurre with the reſt of them, ſo farre as we all goe in bearing witneſſe againſt any ſet formes, or the corruptions in them; In diſpatching whereof, we have been the more ſlow, becauſe it behoved us firſt to inquire into, and to ſettle ſome controverſies amongſt our ſelves, before we could well attend to entertaine diſcourſe about forraigne queſtions which do not ſo neerely concerne our preſent eſtate and practiſe. Beſides your Letters being ſent to the Miniſters of the Churches, and ſome of us dwelling farre aſunder, it was not an eaſie thing for all of us often to meet together to conſider of theſe Queſtions, much leſſe to reſolve upon one juſt anſwer. But having at length (by the aſſiſtance of God) brought our Anſwers to this iſſue, we commend it to the bleſſing of the Lord, and in him to your Chriſtian, and judicious conſideration; where if all things bee found ſafe, and duely warranted from Scripture grounds; do you alſo as ſeemeth vigilant Watchmen of the Lords flock, and faithfull witneſſes to God; If any thing ſeeme doubtfull to you, conſider and weigh it very well before you reject it: If any thing appeare to be unſound, and diſſonant from the Word (which we for our parts cannot diſcerne) we ſhall willingly attend

to

to what further light God may send unto us by you: In the meane while wee intreat you in the Lord, not to suffer such apprehensions to lodge in your minds, which you intimate in your Letters; As if we here justified the wayes of riged separation, which sometimes amongst you we have formerly borne witnesse against: and so build againe the things we have destroyed; you know they separate from your Congregations, as no Churches; from the Ordinances dispensed by you as meere Antichristian, and from your selves as no visible Christians. But wee professe unfainedly, we separate from the corruptions which we conceive to be left in your Churches, and from such Ordinances administred therein as we feare are not of God, but of men; And for your selves, we are so farre from separating as from no visible Christians, as that you are under God in our hearts (if the Lord would suffer it) to live and die together; and we looke at sundrie of you as men of that eminent growth in Christianitie, that if there be any visible Christians under heaven, amongst you are the men, which for these many yeeres have been written in your foreheads (*Holinesse to the Lord*) which we speake not to prejudice any truth which our selves are here taught and called to professe, but we still beleeve though personall Christians may be eminent in their growth of Christianitie: yet Churches had still need to grow from apparent defects to puritie; and from reformation to Reformation, age after age, till the Lord have utterly abolished Antichrist with the breath of his mouth, and the brightnesse of his comming, to the full and cleare revelation of all his holy Truth; especially touching the ordering of his house and publick worship; as a pledge of this our estimation of you, and sincere affection to you, we have sent you these Answers to your demand, and shall be readie, by the help of Christ, to receive back againe from you, wise, and just, and holy Advertisements in the Lord.

Now the Lord God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, your Lord and ours, lead us all unto all Truths, purge out all Leaven out of his Churches, and keepe us blamelesse and harmlesse in his holy Faith and feare, to his heavenly kingdome, through him that hath loved us; In whom we rest,

Your very loving Brethren, the Elders
of the Churches in New-England.

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Reverend

Reverend and dearely beloved Brethren,

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IT is not to be doubted but while we live here, we shall have just cause to search and try our ways, look back upon former courses, and call things done to more strict examination. For being over-clouded with ignorance, compassed about with infirmities, and beset with many temptations to sinne, knowing what we know best, but darkly and in part, no marvell, if in many things we offend ignorantly, of frailty for want of due consideration, rashly mistaking Errour for Truth, condemning Truth for Errour, suspecting evill without cause, and not suspecting where is just reason, drawing erronious conclusions from sound principles, and maintaining truths upon weak grounds; so that in examination of our wayes, and endevours of their Reformation wee had need to looke warily, that wee turn not to the right hand or to the left, for in the one we add to the Word of God, as well as in the other, and of our selves are apt to strike aside to both. A loose conscience will be profane, a tender, scrupulous. It stands us therefore upon to have our selves in suspition, in as much as experience teacheth that many have swerved from the path of sound peace and comfort on each hand.

It is truly observed by Master *Davenport* out of *Ambros. Offic. l.* 1. c. 1 *Et quantumlibet quisque profecerit, nemo est qui doceri non indigeat dum vivit. Appoll.* Preface to the Reader.

Wherefore *Beloved Brethren)* if since your comming into *New England*, upon serious Review of former actions you have discovered any truths heretofore not taken notice of, we shal be so far from rejecting them because of your former judgment and practice, that we shall heartily desire to know and imbrace the same with you, and blesse God for you as the happy instruments of his glory, our Instruction & the advancement of the truth. But if the discoveries be of the like nature with the positions mentioned in the Letter; as before, so still, we conceive them to be new opinions, and not warranted by Scripture, which is the true Antiquity.

Opinions we say, not practices, for not changing your opinion, you might lawfully alter your practice; nay, what you did tolerate formerly as a burthen, in case

not free, you might well forgoe being at your liberty. Your judgement being the same, you might use your liberty in forbearance of a set Liturgie, and yet retaine the same judgement of a stinted Liturgie, that you had before; you might forbeare for a time upon speciall Reason (such as present state and occasion might suggest) to receive to the Sacrament approved Christians, not set members of a particular Congregation; as some Brethren do) who yet dare not think it unlawfull to communicate with such in the act of worship, or deem it just and right altogether to debar them, as having no right nor title to those priviledges of this Church. It is your opinions whereto we had respect not simply your practice. It never entred into us to perswade you to a set Liturgy, much lesse to complain that you had not accepted ours. But that all stinted Liturgies should be condemned as devised worship, and so condemned as that none may lawfully be present at, or partake of the Sacraments administred in a stinted or devised forme, this wee called a new opinion.

Neither do we mention it because we knew it to be the private opinion of some Brethren among you, whom we had left to the liberty of their owne judgment, so far as the maintenance of the Truth, and a just call did not ingage us: but because it was cryed up, and advanced with all diligence, and endeavour of some among us standing affected *New England*-ward, as if a chief point of holinesse consisted in separation. You know how great a fire a little sparkle kindles. And seeing this Distraction and Rent had its originall, growth and continuance from some Brethren in those parts, or affected to that way, when in loving and friendly manner we could neither receive grounds at home for our conviction, nor procure just satisfaction to the contrary; what could wee doe lesse then call upon you joyntly to know your judgment, and either by sound proof to be by you convinced (if happily you should approve their separation (which we esteem groundlesse, rash, unlawfull, and prejudiciall to outward peace) or being backed by a testimony of its dislike from you, we might the better be both incouraged, and furnished to endevour the quenching of that fire which was kindled but in too many places,

In other perticulars also, wee conceive, you goe beyond Commission given of God: granting them authority to whom God hath not committed it, debarring others from the priviledge of the Sacraments, who have title thereto by the Covenant of grace.

Your love in that you were pleased to signifie first your kinde and respective acceptance of our Letter, and now also to send us an answer thereto, we acknowledge it with all thankfulnesse, and shall endevour (through the grace of God) to return like affection in truth of heart, if in measure we fall short. Of your respect to us in particular, we make no question, your expressions are beyond that we could expect, as also what we dare own. But we humbly beseech the Lord to direct, uphold, and

guide

guide us, that in some measure we may walk worthy of our vocation, and approve our selves faithfull to your consciences.

It was one end of our writing to be satisfied in this point, whether you approve the ways of Separation (whereof wee complain) and their courses who laboured with all their might, when they conceived hope to be heard to perswade thereunto. Against which (if we knew your judgment) you testified among us.

You know they that separate are not all of one straine and temper. Some deny all communion with us publick and private, some admit of private, but deny all publick, and some joyne in Prayer before, and after Sermon, as also preaching of the Word (because in their esteeme, this may be done without communion in a Church-way) but refuse to partake of the Sacraments. All which Separations wee judge uncharitable, contrary to the Commandement of Christ, and have ever thought that you (whilst with us) and we were of one minde herein.

If of late we have conceived fears of some of you (deere Brethren) as leaning too much to what formerly you disliked, we beseech you weigh what urgent and pressing Reasons forced us thereunto, and we shall most gladly (wee heartily desire you to rest assured) lay hold of every line and syllable, that may tend to dislodge such apprehensions.

For as we conceive, the dispute to be unreasonably moved, the Rent offensive, the opinions themselves prejudiciall to the cause of God, and the advancers thereof to have passed the limits prescribed by God; so wee shall esteem it an inestimable blessing, if (now what hinders being removed) wee might joyn with one heart and soule, in one way of God to promote his glory, and seek the good of his Church and people.

We trust in the Lord, we should not draw back in any course wherein wee may see the Lord going before us, nor be an offence to any to keep the Lords way; wee seek the truth, and are perswaded it is the cause of God which we defend: we plead for Communion with the Churches of Christ, no further then they hold communion with Christ, still desiring *to keepe the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, with your selves and all others*, who walke in the right way of truth, peace and comfort.

How the Lord may be pleased to deale with us, or dispose of us wee know not (his blessed will be done.) But of this we are resolved, through his grace, not willingly to raise trouble or dissention among you, if through ignorance or infirmity we shall not so fall in, as to be of one minde with you in these matters. And here we desire you to consider that in these particulars you dissent as much one from another as we dissent from you, and that wherein we dissent from you (and perhaps from the lesser part of you) you dissent from the judgement and practice of all Reformed Churches.

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Were not these men (saith *Cann* against *Robin*) superstitiously addicted to their new devise, that beware how to reject the unanimous judgment and practice of all learned men and true Churches. Stay against straying. *pag.* 47.

I am and shall be always ready to give all due respect to those good customes of Churches, which are taken upon good warrant and ground, and long continued among Gods people. *I.D. Apol. p.* 31.

Good customes taken up by the Churches upon good grounds should not lightly be broken or laid downe, wherein I doe fully agree with the Authour of that elaborate Commentary upon the fourth Chapter of *Iohn*, *I.D. Apol. Sect.* 12. *Examina. p.* 151.

This wee speake not to prejudice your cause, but to intreat your serious re-examination of what you have sent us, and this tryall thereof, by the Touchstone of the Word. For if we mistake not, in many things it will not abide the Test.

You have written in great love and tenderneſſe, that your Positions might be so scanned, and wee shall endeavour with such affection to try all things, and hold fast that which is good. And now (beseeching the guidance of the Spirit) with your leave, wee shall endeavour to deale fully and plainly, as the nature of the cause requireth, intreating you impartially to consider the grounds whereupon we, go and weigh what wee shall say in the ballance of the Sanctuary. The Lord of his rich mercy in Jesus Christ, direct us in discerning what is right and pleasing in his sight, Cast offences out of the Church, close up Rents and Divisions, reveal his Truth more and more, set up and mayntain the purity of his own Ordinances, unite the hearts of his people to the love and feare of his holy Name, teach us self-deniall, and keep us blameleſſe to the comming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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I POSITION.

That a ſtinted forme of Prayer and ſet Liturgie is unlawfull.

Anſw.

BEfore we proceed to declare our ſelves concerning this poſition: It will be needfull that ſome thing be premiſed, for the explication of the terms thereof. We ſuppoſe,

1 By a Liturgy and forme of Prayer, you mean not a forme of private Prayers compoſed for the helpe and direction of weaker Chriſtians: but the *Syſtem* or body of publike Prayers generally uſed in the Engliſh Parishes, compiled for the Churches uſe by other men not infallibly guided by God, to be ſaid or read out of a Book by their Miniſters as the Churches Prayers. And that this is your meaning, may appeare from your Letter it ſelf, wherein you complain that divers in many parts of that Kingdome have left their Aſſemblies, becauſe of a ſtinted Liturgy. Now we know not of any other ſtinted Liturgy from which the people do abſent themſelves, but onely that which is in uſe in the Engliſh Churches.

For as for a forme of Prayer in generall, wee conceive your meaning cannot be of that. For it is evident that many Preachers conſtantly uſe one ſet form of Prayer of their own making before their Sermons, with whom the people refuſe not to joyn.

2 By ſtinted and ſet, you mean ſuch Prayers, as are ſo impoſed upon the Churches and Miniſters, as that they are limited to that very form of words expreſſed in the Book without addition, diminution, or alteration; for that Liturgy and forme among you, is in this ſenſe ſet and ſtinted.

3 By unlawfull, you mean that we looking at that form, as ſwerving from the Rule; neither dare firſt practice it our ſelves, nor ſecondly approve the uſe of it by others.

This being the true ſtate of the queſtion, ſo far as it appears to us, from the letter. We anſwer, 1 For our own practice, the Churches here doe not uſe any ſtinted forme of Prayer and ſet Liturgy, for theſe and other ſuch Reaſons. 1 Becauſe we finde no neceſſity of any ſtinted Liturgy to be uſed among us, by vertue of any divine precept. And ſeeing the Commiſſion of the Apoſtles limited them, to teach men to obſerve and do onely what Chriſt did command them in matters of this nature, *Math.* 28.20. Who are we and what are our Churches, that we ſhould preſume above this Commiſſion? And, we hope, it will not be offenſively taken by any godly Brethren, That we ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free in this, as well as in all other things.

Secondly, becauſe the lawfulneſſe of ſet forms and ſtinted Liturgies is queſtioned and doubted of by many faithfull ſervants of God: whereas for Church-officers to

edifie the Churches by their own gifts, as well in praying as in preaching, all sorts without controversie grant it to be lawfull. Now spirituall prudence guideth believers, when two ways are set before them, one doubtfull though ventured on by some, the other certainly safe and good, though neglected by many, to choose that which is safe, declining the other.

Thirdly, Because Primitive paterns of all the Churches of God in their best times (when as touching this point they kept the rule in their eye) whether Jewish before Christ, or Christian above a 100 yeers after Christ, yield not the least foot-step to shew us another safe way to walk in, then this we have chosen. As for after times towards the end of the second, and beginning of the third Century, we know how far the Churches were then degenerated and declined from the first purity; neither do we marvell at it, seeing in the Apostles time the mystery of iniquity began to work, and it was then foretold, that the power of godlinesse would be in afterumes exchanged for empty formes. In which respect, we look not at them as our guides neither in this, nor other particulars not warranted by the Rule, herein following the advise of *Cyprian*, who himself saw the corruption of those times, *Non est attendendum quid aliquis ante nos faciendum putaverit, sed quid qui ante omnes est Christus fecerit & faciendum præceperit.*

To conclude, seeing our Christian liberty freeth us from binding our selves to any religious observances, whereunto the written word doth not bind us. And seeing spirituall prudence directs us to choose those ways, which on all hands are confessed to be safe, avoiding those that be doubtfull and hazardous. And seeing it will not be safe for us, needlesly to swerve from the constant practice of all Churches that are recorded in Scripture, and there held forth as a cloud of Witnesses for us to follow in matters of this nature, wee therefore may not, doe not, dare not use set forms of Prayers and stinted Liturgies in these Churches.

More particularly, in that we doe not use that forme of Prayer and stinted Liturgy, which is in use among your selves: these and such other like Reasons have induced us thereunto. 1 The many and just exceptions whereunto that Liturgy is lyable both for matter and manner; for the proofe whereof wee referre you to those faithfull servants of God, who have gone before us in witnessing against the same: Amongst others to Master *Cartwright*, and the Abridgment.

2 In as much as that Liturgy was never commanded of God, and hath been greatly abused to Idolatry and Superstition, and is not of any necessary use, and therefore we are afraid to bring it into the Worship of God, as knowing the jealousie of the Lord, in matters of this nature; *Exod.*20, and how strictly hee commandeth his people, that all monuments and remnants of Idolatry and Superstition should be abolished from among them, *Deut.*5.25.26. *Exod.*23.13. *Esay* 30. 22. 2 *Cor.*6.17. In which respect the holy Ghost hath greatly commended *Iacob*, *David*, *Iehu*, *Hezechia* and *Iosiah*, for taking away the remembrance of such things,

*Gen.*35.2,4. *Psal.*16.4. 2 *King* 10.26,27. & 18.4 & 23. all the Chapter. And where other Kings of *Iudah* came short of the like zeale, the Scripture notes it as a blemish in them that the high places were not taken away albeit the people did not sacrifice in them to false gods, but onely to the Lord, 2 *Chron.*15.17. & 20.33. & 33.17. Yea, moreover, it appeareth by the Scripture, that somethings that had a good Originall and use (if they be not still necessary and commanded of God) are unlawfull when once they are knowne to be defiled by Idolatry, and abused to it, 2 *King.*18.4. *Hos.*2.16,17. As the brazen Serpent was at the first an Institution though but temporary: but when the children of *Israel* burned Incense to it, *Hezechiah*, is commended for breaking it in pieces, and the Lord witnesseth of him that he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and according to his Commandement, which he commanded *Moses*, 2 *King.*18.3,6. how much more in the like case ought other things to be removed, which never were commanded of God, but onely were devised by men? And that that Liturgy hath been superstitiously abused, may be cleer to any that shall consider that it is the same for substance that was used in the days of Popery. And therefore when the Papists in *Devonshire* and *Cornwall*, had made a Commotion and Rebellion upon the change of Religion, in the days of King *Edward* the Sixth. It was told them by the King, for the pacifying of them: *That it was the self-same Service in English, which had been before in Latine: and if the Service of the Church was good in Latine, it remayneth good in English, for nothing is altered: Fox Acts and Monuments, Edward 6.* And Pope *Pius* the fifth did see so little variation in it from the Latine Service, that had been formerly used in that Kingdome, that he would have ratified it by his authority, if Q. *Elizabeth* would have so received it. And many of the people put such holinesse in it, that they think God is not rightly worshipped, nor his Sabbath well observed, nor the Sacraments sufficiently administred, if there be no reading of that Service. And others put such holinesse and necessity in it, that they preferre it before Gods holy Ordinance of preaching the Word. In so much as the Ministers are in the danger of being called in question, and of being censured, if they doe not read that Liturgy every Lords day without omitting any part thereof, either in respect of preaching or otherwise.

This Argument is used by the Abridgment against conformity to the Ceremonies, and we do not see but it is as strong against this Liturgy.

3 In regard of the many wofull scandals, and dangerous consequences of using that Liturgie, of which we suppose you are not ignorant.

To mention but two, *Viz.* The hardning of Papists who are imboldned to think better of their own Breviaries, Masse-Books, Portuisses, seeing that Liturgie hath bin extracted out of those books, and rather fetched from them then from the forms used in any of the reformed Churches.

2 The countenancing and establishing of an unlearned Idol Ministery, of not-Preaching curates, Non-residents, Pluralities, &c. in whose skirts is to be found the

blood of so many mens souls living and dying in their sins, while they ignorantly content themselves with, and harden themselves in some empty forms of Religion and blinde devotion, which are begotten and cherished chiefely by such prayers and ministers. Neither is there lesse scandall hereby (we meane not onely taken but given) then by the eating of an Idolathite, in the Idols Temple condemned by the Apostle 1 *Cor.* 8.7 10. For if the eating of an Idolathite by him that had knowledge, and knew that an Idol was nothing, and that all meats were lawfull, did imbolden others to honour the Idol, and therefore was a scandall given, so also it is in this case.

4 Seeing that booke is so imposed as that the minister in reading of it, is limited to the very words set downe without any diminution, addition, or alteration; therefore we dare not use it.

For 1 The Lord himselfe hath not limited his people to his own formes and therefore we see not, how it can be lawfull to be limited to other mens formes; For in thus doing we should subject our selves to the exercise of such an authority and power of the Prelates, as in this case puts forth a stronger act of limiting power then Christ himselfe, who doth not limit us to those formes, which himselfe hath set downe in Scripture: For though we acknowledge the Lords prayer and other formes set down in Scripture, may be lawfully used as prayers (due cautions being observed) yet there is not a limitation lying upon the Churches in the use of those prayers. And therefore we do not find that the Apostles ever used that form taught by Christ in those very words, much lesse limited themselvs to it, when they prayed, nor did they teach the Churches so to doe.

2 If the Lord would not have us limit our selves in our own forms, whiles we are exercising our own gifts (which he hath specially sanctified to edify his Church *Act.*6.4. *Eph.*4.8. 1 *Cor.*12.7.) least we should quench or at least straiten his spirit in prayer, 1 *Thes.*5.19. would he then have us limited to other mens forms, which have not beene in like sort sanctified of God, but will rather quench or straiten the spirit of God, whiles we are so limited to them?

3 The entertainment of this form hath been a manifest snare unto the Churches who upon the same ground on which they have received this forme into the desks have beene limited to others in the pulpit, by meanes whereof the poore Church of Christ hath bin wholly deprived of the publike use of the Ministers gifts in prayer, and the spirit of prayer in the Ministers in publike, hath beene greatly restrained.

As for our Judgement concerning the practice of others, who use this Liturgie in our native Countrie, we have alwayes beene unwilling to expresse our mindes there against unlesse we have been necessarily called thereunto, and at this time we thinke it not expedient to expresse our selves any further concerning this matter, as loath to intermeddle with the affaires of other Churches, but contenting our selves with, and blessing the Lord for those liberties which we, by the mercie of God do

here enjoy, reserving also due reverence to the judgements of our beloved brethren and deere Countreymen, who may concerning this matter be otherwise minded.

Reply.

THis position cannot beare that which you give it, if you take it according to our mindes, and the plain construction of the words. We never questioned why you made not use of a stinted Liturgy, much lesse why you did not wholly and in every part tye your selves unto, and approve of that forme in use amongst us. You might well thinke we had little to doe to put forth such a demand, *viz.* whether you thinke it lawfull to approve in others and practice your selves, what swerveth from the rule, and we thinke it strange you should give our words such a meaning.

The thing we craved resolution in was, whether in your judgements all stinted and set formes of prayer and Liturgies be unlawfull. The reason hereof was because in writings from *New-England*, we had seene all set liturgies, and set formes of prayer condemned as devised worship which God would not accept, and partaking in the Sacraments of the Supper in our assemblies, therefore disallowed, because administred in a stinted Liturgie, which things were received with such likeing among some brethren with us, and by them imparted and recommended to others, that they occasioned that rent and distraction whereof we complain.

It is true, the people among us separate from our forme of prayer or liturgy, but the reason hereof is because it is stinted, not because this or that or ours in particular.

You confesse you want not some brethren among you who look at all set formes of Prayer invented by one of another age or congregation, and prescribed to their brethren, to be read out of a booke for the prayers of the Church, as Images and Imaginations of man forbidden in the second Commandement, and that the lawfulnesse of Liturgies, and set formes is questioned and doubted of by many faithfull servants of God, such also as come over occasionally, who withdraw themselvs from the Sacraments in the congregation, doe it on this pretence, that a stinted Liturgie is a humane invention. And if we examine the reasons brought against stinted formes and Liturgies, we shall finde them to strike at all formes and Liturgies though devised by men of the same age and congregation, and to be used but now and then, or but once on set purpose, and that either in publike or in private, as elsewhere we may have occasion to shew.

You say it is evident, many Preachers constantly use a set forme of Prayer of their own making before their Sermons, with whom the people refuse not to joyne; And you know (we doubt not) that such set formes are disliked also. And if the grounds be examined (in our understanding) they make as much against the one as the other. View but the reasons why you admit not a stinted Liturgie and forme of prayer, and see whether the two last will not in the same terms directly conclude

gainst both. But what ever is to be thought herein, or whether mens practises agree with their opinions we now dispute not. This is plaine and manifest, that mens opinions are to be judged by their expresse words and reasons, not by their practises. The Brownists (as they are commonly called) can separate from no stinted Liturgie amongst us, but that which is in use, and for ought we know they may joyne with their owne Pastors, though they oft use the same forme of prayer in whole or in part, in thanksgiving before meat, or in prayer before Sermon, or the like. And yet their opinion is that all stinted Liturgies and set Formes of prayer be unlawfull, humane inventions forbidden by the second Commandement.

But if any thing had beene left doubtfull in the Letter, that it might be strained to another sence, either because we were short in expression, or many of you not informed in the passages which gave occasion to the question, it is well knowne what the words meane in ordinary construction. And we doubt not but many brethren among you, might and could fully informe you of our meaning that there need no such straining to find it out.

That which followeth in your answer to the position (as you interpret it) wee passe over, because it is not to the matter intended. And wee are as unwilling to trouble you with the affaires of other Churches taking you from your owne weightie occasions, as you are unwilling to be interrupted. Onely in regard of promise, and because plaine dealing serves to maintaine love, we thinke good to advertise you these few things.

1 That your reasons why you accept not of a stinted Lyturgie be ambiguously propounded, for sometimes you plead onely for your libertie herein, and that a stinted forme is not necessary, and sometime you speake so, as they that looke at Stinted Lyturgies, as Images forbidden in the second Commandement will easily draw your words to their meaning.

2 The reasons you bring against a set forme of prayer or Liturgie doe hold as strong against a set forme of Catechisme confession and profession of faith, blessing, baptizing and singing of Psalmes.

3 Wee have not called upon you at this time to witnesse for, or against the corruptions in the Communion-Booke. This you fall upon by straining the sense of our demands contrary to the true meaning thereof.

The reasons which you bring against it, we cannot approve them all; The exceptions which have bin taken both from the matter and manner thereof we know: But to esteeme the whole for some corruptions found therein, a monument of Idolatry, that we have not learned.

The Argument in the abridgement which is used against conformity to the Ceremonies did not in their judgement who were authors of the Booke hold against the Lyturgie, of which opinion we are also.

4 If these reasons be intended onely to shew why you receive not our forme of administration,

administration, it is that which (we are perswaded you know) we never required of you. If to disallow the use of the Booke amongst us altogether in things lawfull, good and pertinent, they will not hold weight.

5 You are generally (as you say) loath to meddle with the affaires of other Churches, unlesse you have been necessarily called thereunto. But when some upon the request (as we suppose) of private friends, and others out of their zeale and forwardnesse have laboured to draw many to separation from the Sacrament, because ministred in a stinted Lyturgie: wee cannot apprehend any just ground of this apologie. The Rent is wide, and some brethren had their hands deepe therein, which made us at this present to crave your judgements, and the reasons thereof to make up the breach.

6 *I. D.* objecteth to Master *P.* that his manner of preaching was disorderly in carrying that matter, he speakes of, to the Classes, before he had declared to the Church the equity of his refusing the Ministers desired by the Scriptures. And may not we with like reason object, that this manner of proceeding is disorderly in seeking to draw men to Separation, because of stinted Liturgie, before you had shewed to us or other brethren (whom it may concerne) by Scripture, or reasons drawne from thence, that a stinted Liturgie was unlawfull? but of this wee may intreat more fully elsewhere.

Whereas the publisher of this answer to the six Positions, refers the reader to Mr. *Cottons* answer unto Mr *Ball* for satisfaction in this point concerning set formes of prayer. The reader is earnestly intreated to compare Master *Balls* Treatise, and Mr *Cottons* answer with seriousnesse and indifference, because Mr *Ball* having received that answer before the publishing of his Treatise (being much enlarged, whereof *Mr. Cotton* was ignorant) was confident, that with addition of some marginall notes (which in reference thereto he added) his Treatise would sufficiently defend it selfe, against all the assaults, which that answer made against it.

II. POSITION.

That it is not lawfull to joyne in prayer, or receive the Sacraments where a stinted Liturgie is used, or as we conceive your meaning to be in this, as in the former question, viz. where, and when that stinted Liturgie is used.

Answer.

IT seemeth by this your letter, the ground of this Position hath beene the separation of divers from your assemblies, because of a stinted Liturgie: and we are not ignorant of the rigid separation of divers people, who withdraw themselves from an able faithfull ministry, as no ministry of Christ, and from their godly congregations as no Churches of Christ; because of some corruptions from which (through want of light, not love of the truth) they are not throughly cleansed. Against which practise we have ever witnessed.

As for our Judgement concerning the Position it selfe, we would promise two things:

things; First concerning the persons reading this Liturgie, which may be either an ungodly or unable Minister, or an able and a godly.

Secondly, concerning the Liturgie it selfe, which may be either of the whole or some select prayers, which may be conceived to be the least offensive.

Now if the question be of joyning in prayer with, and when that whole Liturgie is used, or where that which is used, is read by an unable and ungodly Minister, we then see not how it can be lawfull to joyne in prayer in such cases; For

1 The prayers of the Minister are not his private prayers, but the publike prayers of the whole assembly, whose mouth he is to God. And when the prayers offered up by the Minister, as a living holy, and acceptable service to God, are not through humane frailty, but otherwise for matter and manner corrupt, wee see not what warrant any one hath to joyne with such prayers, *Mal.* 1.13,14.

2 When men ioyne therein with an insufficient Ministry, they doe not only countenance them in their place and office, whom the Lord hath rejected from being his Preists. *Hos.* 4.6. but also set up those Idolls and means of worship to edifie themselves by, which God never appointed in his holy word *Ezeck.* 11.17.

But if the question be of joyning in some few select prayers read by an able and painfull Minister out of that booke as on the one side wee are very tender of imputing sin to the men that so joyne: so on the other side, we are not without feare least that such joyning may be found to be unlawfull: unlesse it may appeare that the Ministers with whom the people have communion in reading those prayers doe neither give any scandall by reading of them nor give unlawfull honour to a thing abused to Idolatry, and superstition, nor doe suffer themselves to be sinfully limited in the reading of them.

Reply.

SUfficient hath been spoken of the meaning of the position and the grounds thereof and if we have not mistaken your judgment & practice both, you have born witnesse against both that you call the rigid seperation, and this more moderate also; And we humbly wish, the moderate doe not degenerate into the rigid ere long. It is very strange, if they take not great incouragement upon your grounds. The truth of our ministery, Churches, Ordinances, and calling is questioned, and where men will stay the Lord knoweth, and what more common then that our Liturgie is unlawfull, because it is the devise of man; The Author (or publisher at least) of a letter against our Service booke beginneth with such like distinction.

„ Against this Prayer-booke (saith he) divers have pleaded in a different man-
„ ner. First some arguments are proper to the Separatists *quatales, viz.* that it is
„ offered in a false Church; 2. By a false minister; 3. In the behalfe of the subjects
„ of the Kingdome of Antichrist. These are properly theirs, being the grounds
„ whereupon they make a totall separation from all the Churches in this Land, as
„ no Churches of Christ. These I approve not, yet note them that yee may see

„ upon

„ upon what different grounds, the same Position is maintained by severall per-
„ sons, and that yee may be delivered from the prejudice, which hinders many from
„ receiving those truths, because they feare the reproach of Browniſme.

„ Secondly, there are other grounds which are common to all that plead for the
„ the puritie of Christs ordinances, and which doe not necessarily inferre such sepa-
„ ration, but only serve to shew the unlawfulnesse of that practise, and our commu-
„ nicating therein.

Thus the Epistle wherein the same distinction of separation is noted: but how truly, let the indifferent judge. If none must be counted Separatists, but such as have pleaded against the booke of Common prayer as unlawfull, because offered up in a false Church, &c. then are there none such in the world, that we have knowne or heard of: for it is apparent they cast us off as no Churches of Christ, because our Service is a humane devise, will-worship, Idolatry; And not on the contrary, that our Service is will-worship, or Idolatry, because our Churches are false Churches. Against all Communion with us they plead, because we are a false Church, but against our stinted Liturgie they argue not in that manner.

The grounds on which that Authour builds (which he saith are common to all, that plead for the purity of Gods ordinances) are one and the same with the grounds of the Separatists, shafts taken out of the same quiver and peculiar to them, some few brethren onely excepted, who of late have looked towards that opinion. See how affection will transport. Those reasons shall be common to all that plead for the purity of Christs Ordinances, which were never taken to be sound and true, either by the reformed Churches abroad, or by the godly Brethren at home, whether now at rest with the Lord, or for the present living, or yet by the most of the brethren among whom they live, and with whom they hold societie, or by any minister or Societie which did hold the unitie of the spirit in the bond of peace for the space of this 1400 yeares and upwards, by your owne confession, unlesse within these few dayes, and that by a few onely. If this be not to strengthen the hands of the Separatists, or at least, to lay blocks of offence in their way, what is? As yet we thinke most of them that have separated, are not so farre gone, as to condemne all our Assemblies as no Churches of Christ, but we judge they have proceeded further then Christ the Lord and Saviour of his Church hath given them commission or allowance, that the grounds whereon they build are unsound, and such as make way for further danger, if the Lord prevent not. And that the reasons mentioned in the letters are the proper grounds of Separatists, and not common to all them that seeke the purity of religion, for they are not approved by your selves: and if all this tend not to turne them who halt, out of the right way, wee heartily intreate you to consider.

Your judgement concerning the Position, you deliver in three propositions (for so many they be for substance) In respect of the persons reading the Liturgie, or the

thing it selfe that is read. As if any part of the Liturgie bee read, (put case some few selected prayers onely, by an unable and ungodly minister: it is unlawfull (say you) for the people to joyne in that case. But if it be unlawfull for the people to joyne, when an ungodly minister readeth some few select prayers, it is either in respect of the Minister, or the prayers themselves. Not of the prayers themselves, for they be select and choyce, faultlesse both in respect of matter and manner, as it is taken for granted, unlesse this distribution be to no purpose; if in respect of the Minister, then it is not lawfull to joyne with such a one in any ordinance of God whatsoever. For if the Minister make it unlawfull, then all communion in any part of Gods worship, with such Ministers is unlawfull, and so the Church in all ages of the world, the Prophets, our Saviour Christ, the Apostles, and the faithfull in the primitive Churches sinned, in holding Communion with such, when the Priests were dumbe dogges that could not barke, and greedy dogges that could never have enough; when the Prophets prophesied lies, and the Priests bare rule by their meanes; when the Priests bought and sold Doves in the Temple, and tooke upon them to provide such things for them that were to offer; when the Pharisees corrupted the Law by false glosses, taught for doctrines mens precepts, made the commandements of God of none effect through their traditions, under pretence of long prayer devoured widowes houses, taught the Law, but practised it not; when they were such, and did such things, they were ungodly Ministers; But we never find that the Prophets, our Saviour, the Apostles, did either forbeare themselves, or warne the faithfull not to communicate with such in the ordinance of worship. We reade our Saviour charged his Disciples, to beware of the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees, to let them alone, because they were the blind leaders of the blind, but he never forbade to communicate with them in the ordinances of God. It is not then for private Christians to withdraw themselves from the ordinance of worship, and communion of the Church, because such are permitted to deale in the holy things of God, whom they judge or know unfit: when men joyne in the worship of God with unworthy Ministers, they doe not countenance them in their place and office, but obey the commandement of God, who requires their attendance upon his highnesse in that way and meanes.

We may not Communicate at all in that ministery, which is exercised by an unlawfull person or in an unlawful place *Robinson* against *Bern.* Counsell debated *p 17 Ibid. pag 79.*

Esa.56.10. Ezech 4 1. 7, 8 Mic 3. 11, 12. Ier. 5. 31. Esa. 9 15, 6. Ioh. 2 16. Math 5 20, 21. & 15. 4, 5. & 23 1-3. 14.

Math. 16 6. 12. & 15. 14.

See *Whitak. de pontif q. 4. f. 10 pag 557. Phil. 1. 15.*

To goe no further then the text you quote, *Because thou hast despised knowledge, I will also reject thee, &c.* Properly the text is spoken of the ten tribes called *Israel*, and the Priests among them who worshipped the Calves which *Ieroboam* had set up, whom the Lord threatneth to reject, because they had rejected

Hos. 4 6, 7.

rejected knowledge being either wilfully ignorant, or withholding the truth in unrighteousnesse. Whether they were for the present absolutely rejected, or the Lord threatens only to reject them we will not dispute.

This may suffice that it is not to be found either in this or any other Text of Scripture, that the people joyning in the true Worship of God, with unworthy Ministers, do countenance them in their place thereby. On the contrary, if you will extend this Text to all unworthy Ministers of what sort soever, whom the word of truth doth condemne as not approved Ministers of God, the Scripture teacheth evidently not onely that the people by joyning do not countenance them in their place and office, but that they must and ought to joyne with them in the worship of God, and in separating from the Ordinance they shall sinne against God, much lesse then do they in such joyning set those Idols and meanes of worship, which God never appointed in his Word. For the worship is of God, and the Ministery is of God, the person unworthily executing his place, is neither set up by some few private Christians, nor can by them be removed. And warrant to withdraw themselves from the worship of God, because such as ought not, are suffered to entermeddle in the holy things of God, they have none from God. Dumbe Dogs, greedy Dogs, Idol-sheepheards, false Prophets, Strangers, are unworthy Ministers, but they that communicate with such in the ordinance of worship, are never said to set up Idols or means of worship which God never appointed. The sheep of Christ will not heare strangers in the Lords sense, but outwardly they heard those strangers preach (if the Scribes and Pharisees were such) and by hearing them discovered them to be strangers, i.e. false Prophets; Some strangers at least, of whom our Saviour speaks, were of the true Church, and of *Israel*, but brought false doctrine tending to kill the soule, such strangers none should heare, that is, believe and follow: but as they be tolerated in the Church, so they may hear them, so long as they bring the truth. Unworthy Ministers are no Ministers for themselves, but they are Ministers for the people of God, that is, so long as they be in the place of Ministers, the acts of their administrations are of force to the faithfull, if they observe the forme of administration prescribed by Christ; for Christs Ordinances have their efficacy from him, not from them that serve about them, and evill Ministers minister not in their own name, but in Christs and by his Commission.

1 Sam. 2. 12, 13, 14, 17, 24. Ier. 8. 8, 9. Mic 3. 11, 12. Phil. 1. 15.

It hath evermore bin held for a truth in the Church of God, that although sometimes the evill have chiefe authority in the ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet for as much as they doe not the same in their own name but in Christs, and minister by his Commission and Authority, wee may use their Ministery both in hearing the Word, and receiving the Sacraments; neither is the effect of Christs

Helv conf cap 18 § 11. & 19 § 9, Gal. conf. art. 28 Arg. conf. Art. 13 Saxon. conf. Art. 12 Zep. de Sac. l. 2. c 6. Art. of Religion, Hybern. Art 70 Carlton præfat de Ecclesia, cap. 20.

Ordinance taken away, by their wickednesse, nor the grace of Gods gifts diminished from such as by faith, and rightly doe receive the Sacraments administred to them which are effectuall; because of Christs institution and promise, although they be ministred by evill men.

Beza *de Presbyt. et excõmunicat. p. 25 26. Ista vero, quia nonnulli à sacris catib. & sacrament. usu propter aliorum vitia ultro abstinent i.e. seipsos excommunicant magnam reprehensionem merentur.*

The reasons whereby the ancient Churches condemned the Donatists and Catharists for their voluntary and seditious separation, and the moderne Churches condemne the Anabaptists for their unwarrantable departure from, and so renting of the body of Christ, will hold against separation from the prayers of the congregation, because they are read by an ungodly minister.

The second proposition. Where the whole Liturgie is used, though by an able and godly Minister, it is not lawfull to joyne in prayer in that case. Herein wee cannot be of your judgement; for in the times of the Prophets, and our Saviour Christ, as great abuses, no question, were found in the Church of the Jews in the administration of holy things of God as can be imagined in our Liturgie or forme of prayer: but the Prophets and our Saviour who taught the people to keepe themselves pure and undefiled, never taught them to separate from the administration of the holy things of God. And if the presence at our forms of prayer be not lawful by reason of the corruptions alleaged, there can be no visible society named throughout the world since 200. yeeres after Christ or thereabouts, wherein a Christian might lawfully joyne in Prayer, reading the Scripture, hearing the word or participation of the Sacraments. For compare the doctrines, prayers, rites at those times in use in the Churches with ours, and in all these, (blessed be the name of the Lord) wee are more pure then they. But no man will be so bold (we hope) as to affirme the state of the Churches within 200. yeeres after Christ, to be so miserably decayed that the faithfull could not without sin hold communion with them in the aforesaid ordinances. The prayers of the Minister, whether conceived or stinted in a set forme, be not his private prayers, but the publike prayers of the whole assembly, whose mouth he is to God both in the one and the other. But you will not say, the people ought not to joyne with their Pastor in the publique assembly, if ought bee amisse in his prayer for matter, or manner, or both. It is all one to the people in this case, whether the fault be personall (as some distinguish) or otherwise knowne beforehand or not knowne: For if simple presence defile, whether it was knowne beforehand or not, all presence is faulty. And if simple presence defile not, our presence is not condemned, by reason of the corruptions knowne, whereof we stand not guilty, whether the corruption be through humane frailty or not, it is not in us to enquire, but rather whether we be called to come, and the faults such as one Christian

stian cannot or must not tolerate in another without breach of charity. For if the errour be such as may be tolerated, and I am called to be present; by such fault I am not defiled though knowne before. If the error be such as in conscience may not be tolerated, though not knowne before hand, I am bound, if present some way to professe against it. This distinction of personall and ministeriall faults in this case untill it be cleared by some Text of Scripture or sound reason from the word, must goe for the devise of man.

A Church, a Minister, or a Christian may be stiffe in an error (being misperswaded it is a truth) after many meanes long used to convince them, with whom yet we must hold communion in the ordinances of Religion: and the error may be such as we cannot without hypocrisy or denyall of the truth hold communion, though such meanes of conviction have not gone before. But the corruptions alleadged against our forme of prayer for matter or manner, are such as one Christian may and must tolerate in another where he hath no power to redresse them.

Hath not Christian wisdome and experience of humane frailties lessoned you (deere brethren) to beare one with another in matters of greater consequence then any have or can be objected truly against the form of prayer in use among us? And why such corruptions should not be ascribed to humane frailty; we see not: For if a godly Minister make use of a book in things which he judgeth lawfull for matter and manner, the corruption in him that useth it according to his judgement, from what cause can it spring but humane ignorance and frailty? We rest assured you question not the integrity of many, who make much more use of the booke then onely in a few select prayers. From the bottome of our hearts we desire and pray that God would remove out of his Church and worship whatsoever offendeth for matter or manner, and that all things may be so done, not onely that they may be tolerated but that they might be approved in the conscience of all men.

We see no warrant why for every particular act, that in a larger sence is Idolatrous, adjoyned to Gods true worship, we should forbeare our presence at the true worship it self. Unreason. of seperation. answ to 6. argument.

But we are perswaded that not onely some few select prayers but many prayers & other exhortations may lawfully be used, with fruit and edification to Gods people.

To aggravate faults especially when it tends to draw away people from the Ordinances of God, is no lesse fault then to excuse them, it may be greater, and therefore we dare not esteeme the prayers read by a godly and faithfull Minister according to the booke in use among us, a corrupt sacrifice whether in such as read them, or them that be present. In them that join according to Christs command (and liberty of absence from Christ hath not beene shewed) notwithstanding the corruptions, we hold the prayers to be an holy and acceptable sacrifice to God,

and pleasing to Jesus Christ. The corrupt sacrifice is that, which the deceiver bringeth voluntarily and out of neglect, having a male in his flock: but the faithfull bringeth himself and his godly desires according to the will of God, and as for corruptions, whether respecting matter or forme, they are none of his, they cleave not to his Sacrifice to staine or pollute it. As for the Text of the Prophet *Mal.* 1.13,14. it is cited by many in this businesse, and to many purposes applyed, but we cannot finde that in the Prophet for which it is here brought, *The deceiver is accursed that offereth a corrupt thing to the Lord.* This we reade and beleeve, but that a godly man, being present at this forme of prayer among us, read by a godly and faithfull Minister, is the deceiver, who offereth a corrupt thing unto the Lord, that is not proved. No argument can be brought from this place to the purpose, but by analogy, which is a kinde of arguing of all other most ready at hand, but lyable to most exceptions, and apt to draw aside, if great care be not had, (which in this place we finde not) to take the proportion in every materiall point just and right. And we desire such as alleadge this passage of Scripture against simple presence at the prayers of our Liturgy, advisedly to consider whether God allow them to make such application of his truth which wee much doubt of, to say no more.

Your third proposition. That as you are very tender of imputing sinne to those men that joyne in some select prayers read by an able and godly Minister: so on the other side you are not without feare, least such joyning may be found unlawfull, unlesse it may appeare that the Ministers with whom the people have communion in reading those Prayers, neither give any scandall by reading them, nor give unlawfull honour to a thing abused to Idolatry and Superstition, nor doe suffer themselves to be sinfully limited in the reading of them.

1 We cannot conceive how you should imagine the practice of a godly Minister in reading some few select prayers to be scandalous or offensive in their congregations when the people generally, not in their assemblies onely, but throughout the whole land, were perswaded of the lawfulnesse of that course till now of late some have beene drawne away to separate, who yet by warrant of Scripture produce nothing of weight to countenance that practice.

2 If the booke should be as you take it an idolathite, latent offence doth not oblige. If any man say unto thee [illegible], this is sacrificed to Idols, eat it not, so that if it doe not manifestly appeare that this practice is scandalous; it is not lawfull for the people to withdraw themselves.

3 The book (we speake of the Liturgie so far as it is sound and good) by your confession is no Idolathite, neither was it taken out of the Masse-book in such sense as you object, but rather the masse & other Idolatrous prayers were added to it, for popery is as a scab or leprosie cleaving to the Church, and many truths belonging to the Church as her proper legacie were stollen and heaped together in that denne.

And

And why the true man may not challenge his goods where ever he finds thē, or the thiefe plead title to the true mans goods by prescription, we know not? It is no hard taske to shew that our Service-booke was reformed in most things according to the purest Liturgies which were in use in the Church long before the masse was heard of in the world. And if that could not be shewed, yet formes of speech generally taken (we speak not of this or that speciall word or phrase) is no more defiled by Idolatry then the light aire, or place where Idolatry is committed. It is not unlawfull to pray, Lord helpe, or Lord have mercy, or to give thankes, praised bee God, because the Papists say, *Lady helpe*, or, *praised be God and the Virgin Mary*.

Fourthly, Put case the Minister in reading such prayers gives offence, or attributes unlawfull honour to a thing abused to Idolatry and Superstition, or suffer himselfe to be sinfully limited in the reading of them, what is that to the faithfull? This can be no just ground of the peoples not joyning with them in the worship of God, for that offence is personall onely, and not the sin of them that be present, they joyn in prayer onely, and not in his reading or limiting himself. Not to say that every particular person must be herein both accuser and Judge. If he give offence must they stumble at the stone, and separate from the ordinance of grace? wee should rather think it is their duty to look unto their feet, that they goe not awry. Let it be shewed out of the Word of God, that either the Minister is guilty of giving unlawfull honour, or that the people may lawfully withdraw themselves in case he should do so, and we will then say as you do, but untill that be proved, (being pressed and called to proffer our judgements) we believe that separation is scandalous and sinfull, never taught of God, nor confirmed by the approved example of the godly in any age or time of the Church: yea, against the positive Law of God, injurious to the Churches, distracting Christians, bringing contempt upon the Ordinances of God, and defrauding believers of the spirituall food of their souls, which is indeed to infringe their Christian liberty, and what ever may be thought of it now, in former times it hath been accounted no small offence.

Compare what Master *I. D.* hath written in defence or excuse in resorting to the Assemb. of the Separatists, called Brownists. *Apol. Sect. 5. exam. p. 61. & Apol. Sect. 28 exam. pag. 246.*

Fiftly, if this and such like scruples make it unlawfull to joyn in the ordenance of worship, we must hold communion with no society under heaven. For may not the brethren which hold all stinted Liturgies, and set forms unlawfull say with like strength of reason, It is unlawfull to joyn in conceived prayer with others, if either they give too little honour to it, as deeming the other lawfull, or sinfully limiting, or suffering themselves to be limited to one stinted forme, though conceived at first by them selves? And may not the brethren who hold a stinted forme lawfull in like manner object? It is unlawfull to joyn in prayer with them, because they attribute too much honour to conceived prayer, as making their device and method

the worship of God? And may not the Brethren which hold it lawfull to use some selected prayers according to the forms among us, upon the same grounds condemne communion with both sorts? and all of them one with another, because they either limit themselves too much, or too little? You say in the exposition of the first position, many Preachers constantly use a set form of prayer of their own making before their Sermons, must you not say upon this ground, that it is unlawfull to joyn with them, because they sinfully stint themselves? In probability a Christian may presume, that in the publike worship of God, there will be through humane ignorance & infirmity somwhat amiss for matter, or manner, or both, & that upon this ground, he must joyn with no society in any part of Gods worship at all.

The advancing of every small difference to this height, is that which will bring all to confusion, if men walk uniforme to their own principles. It is well observed by Master *I. Da.* that unlesse men will yield so much favour each to other in some difference of opinions, a dissolving not onely of Churches, but of humane societies also must necessarily follow, & not onely not two Ministers, but not two men should live together, which were to put off even humanity it selfe.

Sixtly, wee have credibly heard that you hold fellowship with professed, rigid Separatists without any acknowledgment of their errour, and receive them as members, or communicate with them in the priviledges of the Church, though you professe you approve not their opinion or practice. And if in godly wisdome, you can see grounds to joyn with them, we marvell you should be so timorous in this particular.

Seventhly, if you judge the practice of such godly Ministers, scandalous to them that separate from the ordinance, because it is not administred in this, or that, but in a stinted form. It is a scandall taken, and not given; and by forbearing, if to confirme men in errour, be to scandalize them, they should offend them the more: yea, they should prejudice the truth, and it might be an occasion to beget needlesse scruples in others, and draw them ignorantly from the fellowship of the Saints in the holy ordinances of God, and strengthen them who by your owne confession, are run too far into Schisme already.

III POSITION.

That the children of godly and approved Christians, are not to be baptized untill their parents be set members of some particular Congregation

IV POSITION.

That the Parents themselves, though of approved piety, are not to be received to the Lords Supper, untill they be admitted as set Members.

Answ.

THese two Positions may be maintained with one and the same defence, being somewhat coincident, and therfore we joyn them as if they were but one. Therefore to prevent all mistakes, it may please you to take notice that we are not of their judg-

judgement who refuse all religious communion with such as are not Church Members, nor doe wee appropriate communion in this priviledge of the seals only to the Members of our own Churches, excluding all other Churches of Christ from the same, though they may be through errour or humane frailty defective in some matters of order, provided that the liberty of our Churches be preserved, of receiving such satisfaction as is meet (as well by Letters of recommendation, or otherwise if it be requisite) concerning those whom wee admit unto fellowship in the seals. For as we account it our duty to keepe the unity of spirit inviolate with any, in whom we discerne any fruits of the spirit, so we hold our selves bound to discharge this duty, according to order. Spirituall cõmunion in prayers, holy conferences & other religious actions of like nature we maintain with al godly persons, though they be not in Church order: But Church communion we hold onely with Church members admitting to fellowship of the seals the known and approved, & orderly recommended members of any true Church. But into fellowship of the censures, admittance of members and choice of Officers, onely the members of that particular Church whereof they and we (any of us) stand members. These things being premised, the considerations whereupon our judgement and practice is swayed for administration of the Seals onely to such as are in order of a true visible Church are these that follow.

Reply.

WHat is here premised to prevent all mistakes, doth seem more to raise then to abate scruples if we mistake not your meaning. You refuse not all religious communion with all that are not Church members, and so much they professe, who formerly have gone for, and professed themselves Separatists from our Assemblies. You do not appropriate this priviledge of the Seals onely to the members of your own Churches, excluding all other Churches of Christ from the same; If your meaning be onely this, that you deny not the Sacraments administred in other Churches to be the true Sacraments of Christ for substance, then you ascribe little more to the Churches of Christ in this, then to the Synagogue of Satan, the Church of *Rome*. For you will not deny Baptisme administred among them to be true for substance: If you deny not to have fellowship with them in the Seals, and to admit them to the Sacrament, and to communicate with them: then either your judgment is contrary to your practice, or you exclude the Churches of *England* from the number of true visible Churches of Christ, which is to destroy what you formerly builded, and here professe. All possible care to keep the Ordinances of God from contempt, we allow and commend, provided you go not beyond the Lords warrant, and deny not the priviledges of the Church to them, to whom they are due by divine appointment, nor the name and title of Church to those societies, which God hath plentifully blessed with means of grace, have received the Tables and Seals, and have entred into Covenant with his Highnesse. Your

liberty to receive such satisfaction as is meet, is not called into question, nor whether you are to keep the bond of the Spirit inviolate according to order. But whether this be to keep the bond of the Spirit inviolate (*viz.*) to exclude from the Sacrament true visible believers or knowne recommended Christians, formerly members of visible Churches among us; and their children; because they are not members (as you speak) in Church Order. And whether God alloweth to put this difference between Church members of your societies & other visible believers walking in holines, though not admitted members of any society according to your Church order, as to receive the one, though members of another society, unto the Seals, and to debar the other and their children. These are the things to be considered in these present positions. And first we will examine your Reasons for your judgment and practice by themselves, and then so far as we judge meet, try your answers to the objections you make against it.

1 *Consideration.*

THe Seals Baptism & the Lords Supper are given to the Church, as a priviledge peculiar therto in ordinary dispensation. Indeed the preaching of the word is not so, being an ordinance given not onely for the edifying of the Church already gathered but also for the gathering of men to the Churches that yet are without: whereas the dispensing of the Seals is Gods Ordinance, given onely for the edifying of the Church being gathered, and not for the gathering of it: And because there is now, no universall visible Church on earth wherein the Seals are dispenced, there being no place, nor time, nor Officers, nor Ordinances appointed in the New Testament by Christ our Lord, for any such Assemblies as the *Iewes* had under *Moses*.

It remains that the Christian Churches, whereunto these priviledges were given, are congregationall, consisting onely of so many as may and do meet together ordinarily in one place for the publike worshipping of God, and their own edifying.

Hence it is that we read so much in the New Testament of the Churches in the plurall number, the Churches of Christ, the Churches of God, the Churches of the Saints: and not onely when they were of divers Nations, the Churches of the *Gentiles*, but also of the same Nation, The Churches of *Iudea*, and not onely when that Country was of large extent and circuit, the Churches of *Asia*, but also of a small part of the Country, The Churches of *Galatia*: yea, when congregations in severall Cities are spoken of, They are called Churches as the Churches of *Ierusalem* the Churches at *Antioch*. To wind up all, seeing the Churches in the Gospell are congregationall, and that Baptisme and the Lords Supper (being Church priviledges) belong onely to the Churches, it will follow, that as City priviledges belong onely to Citizens and their children: so baptisme and the Lords Supper being Church

Rom 16 16. 1 *Cor.* 11 16. & 14 33. *Rom* 16 4. *Gal* 1 22. 1 *Thess* 2 14. 1 *Cor* 16 19. *Gal.* 1 2. *Act* 1: 2. & 19 37. & 15. 25 38.

Church priviledges, belong onely to the members of particular Churches, and their seed. And that seeing *sigillum sequitur donum*, to apply them to others what is it but to abuse them? As a seal of a corporation is abused if added to confirme the grant of priviledges which are peculiar to any Towne corporate to one that being no free-man of that corporation is uncapable thereof.

Reply.

IF by the Church be understood the Society of men, professing the entire faith of Christ, the seales are given unto it as a peculiar priviledge; but if by the Church you understand onely a congregationall assembly in Church order, the seales were never appropriated to it. But to examine every thing in order as it is propounded.

1 The Seales, Baptisme, and the Lords Supper, are given to the Church as priviledges peculiar thereunto, not onely in ordinary (as you say) but also in extraordinary dispensation. True baptisme is not without the Church, but within it; an ordinance given to it, and they that are baptised, must needes be of a Church. The Sacraments are the seales of the Covenant to the faithfull, which is the forme of the Church, and when for substance rightly used, tokens and pledges of our spirituall admittance and entertainment into the Lords family, and Symbolls or testimonies whereby the people of God are distinguished from all other Nations. This is most certain, as in the ordinary; so in the extraordinary dispensation of the Seales, as is confirmed by the Texts of Scripture alleadged in the Margine. For the Apostles (as you say) dispenced the seales in an extraordinary way, but the seales dispenced by the Apostles were Seales of the covenant, priviledges peculiar to the Church, priviledges of spirituall admittance and entertainment into the Lords family.

Eph. 4. 4,5.

Acts 2. 38. 41. *Gen* 1. 10. *Math.* 28. 14 20. *Robinf.* against *Bern.* reas. discus. *pa.* 77.

And when you say the dispencing of the Seals is an Ordinance given onely for the edifying of the Church being gathered, and not for the gathering of it, must it not be understood in extraordinary, dispensation as wel as ordinary: To what pupose then are those words (in ordinary dispensation) added to the proposition? if thereby you would intimate that the Sacraments be not the peculiar priviledges of the Church, and Seales of the Covenant in extraordinary dispensation, it is evidently crosse to the Text you cite, and to your selves afterward. If your meaning be, that in ordinary dispensation the Sacraments doe of right belong to them onely, who bee set members of a visible congregation, it is all one with the conclusion, that which is in question and should be proved, and that which this very Scripture doth plentifully disprove; for they that were baptised were not set members of a particular congregationall Church whereunto they were baptised, nor in a Church way before baptisme (as is evident and granted by the most of your selves) but by bap-

tisme solemnly admitted into the Church, and then it is not for your purpose; or they were set members (as some of the brethren seeme to contend in answer to the objection framed against this consideration) and then the words are more then superfluous. Added, they were to prevent the objection which you foresaw might be made from the Apostles practice and example but so as they cut asunder the sinews of the consideration it selfe, and make it of no force. For as those beleivers were of the Church: so are approved Christians and their seed among us: therefore the priviledges of the seales belong unto them.

2 And as the seales: so is the word of salvation preached and received a priviledge of the Church. If by the preaching of the word you understand nothing but the tender of salvation or the publishing of the will of God, concerning the salvation of man, whether by private or publike persons; it is not proper to the Church but an ordinance given for the gathering of men to the Church, and not only for the edifying of the Church. For the Apostles first preached to the Gentiles when Infidels, that they might be converted; And we doubt not but a Minister or private Christian comming into a country of Infidells, may as occasion is offered, and as they shall be inabled, instruct and perswade them to receive the faith of Christ: but if by the preaching of the word be meant the giving of the word to a people, to abide and continue with them, and consequently their receiving of it at least in profession then it is proper to the Church of God.

Lev 2. 13. *Deut.* 29. 12. & 16. 17. 18. *Rom.* 3. 2 *Deut.* 4 6. *Psa.* 147 19 20 *Neh.* 9. 13. *Act.* 7. 38. *Luk.* 16. 29. 2 *Cor* 5 19. & 11. 2. *Deut* 33. 3. *Io.* 8. 30

The word makes disciples to Christ, and the word given to a people is Gods covenanting with them, and the peoples receiving this word and professing their faith in God through Iesus Christ is the taking of God to bee their God. The lawes and statutes which God gave to Israell, was the honour and ornament to that Nation, and a testimony that God had separated them from all other people, even the Gentiles themselves being Iudges. The word of reconciliation is sent and given to the world reconciled in Iesus Christ, and they that receive the doctrine, law, or word of God are the Disciples, servants and people of God.

In your second consideration you intimate that there is a two fold preaching, the one by office and authority, the other in Common charity, or how ever else it may be called. For thus you write. God hath joyned to preach (*viz.* by office) and to baptize together, therefore we may not separate them. Now to preach unto, that is to instruct or counsell in charity is a duty which may be performed to an infidell, but to preach by office is proper to them that are called to that office: and so to be taught and instructed by Officers in the Church is proper to the Church.

Robin against Bern P 159.

To have pastors who shall feed with knowledge and understanding is a gift of matrimoniall

matrimoniall love which God vouchsafeth unto his Church. The Apostles first gathered Churches and then ordained elders in everie Citie or Church; so that it is proper to the Church to be fed and guided by true spirituall pastors who teach and blesse in the name of the Lord. And if the word preached and received bee a certaine note of the true Church, they that have intyrely received the word of salvation and have Pastors godly and faithfull to feede and guide them, they and their seed have right and interest unto the seales in order.

Act. 14 22. *Tit.* 1 5. *Rob*: against *Barn.* *Act* 11. 26. In the same verse the same persons are called the Church disciples, and Christians *pag.* 116. 117. 211 &c. also *pag.* 51

Moreover the true worship of God is an inseparable and infallible marke of the true Church of God, for where Christ is, there is his Church. This is the prerogative of the church. The Prince shall be in the midst of them, and he shall go in when they goe in, &c. And Christ saith, where 2. or 3. are met together in my name there am I in the middest among them. And for certain they are gathered in the name of Christ that being lawfully called doe assemble to worship God and call upon his name in the mediation of Iesus Christ. In times past, the Church was acknowledged by the feare of God, and entyre Service of his Majestie, by the professing of the true faith and faithfull calling upon Gods name. The signes of Apostolike Churches are these. The continuance in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayer. And if faith, true and lively (though mixed with many doubtings and errors) make a man a living member of Iesus Christ, the entyre profession of true faith joyned with holynesse of life in some measure answerable thereunto, makes a man a true member of the visible Church. And if the seales belong to the Church in right and orderly dispensation, they that joyne together in the true worship of God, according to his will, with godly and faithfull pastors, they have right and title to the Sacraments according to divine institution.

Ezek. 46. 10 See Lavater on *Ezek Math* 18. 20. *Ier.* 14. 9. *Ios.* 24. 14. *Rom.* 10. 14 *Act* 2. 42

Thirdly, that there is now no visible Catholike Church in your sense will easily bee granted. *i.e.* there is no universall society consisting of all such as are accounted or to bee esteemed Christians, subjected to one or many vniversall Pastors or guides, wherwithall subordinates must communicate in some sacred things which may make them one Church and which may and can be performed by that vniversall and head Church only. Such an vniversall Christian Church Christ never ordained, no not in the dayes of the Apostles, to whom all the care of all the Churches, was committed. The Churches planted by the Apostles had all the same substantiall lawes and customes, the same guides and officers for kinde, the same ordinances of worship and meanes of Salvation: But one flock or Society in the fore mentioned acceptation they were not, because they were but subordinate to one visible head, Christ, with which they were to hold union and communion

in some worship to be performed by them all jointly assembled at some speciall solemnity, nor subjected to the government of any supreame tribunall constantly to be erected and continued among them.

As Christ is that one great Pastor, so hath hee gen rally one fo'd and flock, *Iohn* 10.16. *Ezeck.* 34 22.23 which is his Church, as he saith. And *ye my flock, the flock of my pasture are men, Ezek* 34. 31. *Aynsw. Cant* 1.8. Sure it is that hee is none of Christs sheepe visibly, or in respect of men which is without Christs sheepfold, for there is one sheepfold and one sheepheard. *Iohn* 10 16. *Robinf* against *Bern* likelihoods, *p.* 61.

Nevertheless, in some respects of reason, the visible Church, may be called the Church, sheepfold or flock of Christ; for if the whole society or body mysticall of Christ be one, this Church militant in like sort is one: the unity of which society consists in that uniformity, which all severall persons thereunto belonging, have by reason of that one Lord whose servants they all are, and professe themselves, that one Spirit whereby they are animated as the body by one soul; whereby they believe in Christ, and which they acknowledge and professe, that one Baptisme inward and outward, whereby they put on Christ, and are initiated.

Hieron.tom.2.Ep.85. *Nec altera Roma urbis Ecclesia, altera totius orbis existimanda est,* & Gallia, & Britannia, & Asia, *&c. & omnes barbarae Nationes unum Christum adorant, unam observant regulam veritatis.*

This society is one in the inward fruition and enjoying of the benefits of Christs Death and Resurrection, and in outward profession of those things which supernaturally appertain to the very essence of the Church, and are necessarily required in every Christian, this acceptation of the word is not unusuall in Scripture. As God hath set some in the Church. His bodies sake which is the Church. The Church *viz.* whereof *Paul* was made a Minister, and whereunto the rest of the Apostles were ordained, which was the Catholike visible Church, the society of men professing the faith of Christ throughout the world, divided into many particular Churches whereof some are pure, others impure, some more, others lesse sound. Hereunto it may be added, that every multitude and society of believers are indefinitely called the Church, I persecuted the Church of God. The house of God which is the Church of the living God. In which sense all the Churches in the world may truly be called one. And thus the Apostle *Peter* writing to many dispersed Churches, who could not assemble in one place nor be fed by one Shepherd, speaketh of them singularly as one flock. Feed the flock of God which is among you. But that flock are the strangers dispersed through *Pontus, Galatia, Asia, Cappadocia,* and *Bythinia,* which could not possibly joine together in the Ordinances of Worship, or make one distinct congregated assembly.

1 *Cor.* 12. 28. *Col.* 1. 24. 1 *Cor.* 12, 13.

1 *Cor.* 15 9. *Gal.* 1. 13. *Phil.* 3. 6. 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2.

Pastores sunt omnes,

And

sed grex unus qui ab Apostolis omnibus unanimi consensu pascatur. Cypr. *de unitate Ecclesiæ.*

And if the Catholike Militant Church be one Society, the Seals that are given as a prerogative to the Church are given unto it, and the true Members of the Catholike Church have right and title to them in due order, though they be not admitted into the Church fellowship you speak of.

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Etsi pastores multi sumus, unum tamen gregem pascimus, Cypr. *l.* 3. *Epistola* 13. *Cum sit a Christo una Ecclesia per totum mundum in multa membra divisa item Episcopatus unus Episcoporum multorum concordi numero diffusus, &c.* Cypr. *l.* 4. *Ep.* 7.

For as the flock or society is one: so is the Ministery, Faith, Covenant, and Sacraments, which are given as a communion prerogative unto the whole Church, and not appropriated to this or that part or member, as separated from the whole; which is further evidenced hereby, that sometime it hath, and too often it may fall out, that a Christian may be a true member of the universall visible Church (*i.e.* he may hold, professe, and maintain that holy Catholike Faith, pure, and undefiled, without which no man can be saved) who for the present is no actuall member of any particular or visible society in Church order. As for example, a man may be cut off by Excommunication, from all commerce with the present visible Church wherein hee was bred and born, when hee is not cut off from the Catholike, Orthodoxall Church. Hee may be deprived of participation of the Ordinance in every particular society, when his right and title to them is much better then these who have most injuriously cast him out, or debarred him of the means of salvation.

John 9.22.35. & 12.42 & 16.2. *Athanasius* may be for an example.

The communion of Saints, whether visible or invisible is the effect and property of the Church Catholike, and agreeth to the severall parts and members thereof, as they be members of that body under the head, and if particular Churches have commuuion together it must of necessity be, that they bee parts and members of the whole body which is one.

4. Though there be no universall congregation or assembly nor can be imagined, yet there are and have beene many visible assemblies or societies, true Churches of Christ, to whom the Prerogative of the Seals is given, which have not beene united and knit together, in Church-order into one congregationall body or society, For every society in covenant with God is the true Church of God: for what is it to be the flock, people or sheepe of God, but to be the Church of God? And where there is a Covenant, there is the people of God, They that are of the faith of *Abraham*, are the children and seed of *Abraham*, and within the Covenant of *Abraham* (though but two or three) and so of the same Church with him by that covenant. The communicati-

Gen 17.7. *Lev.* 26.12. *Apo.* 21.3. *Heb.* 10.

on

Rob. against *Bern.pa.*127. *Rom.*4.12.18. *Gen.*12.3. *Gal.*3 6,7,8, 15,16,17 *Rob.* against *Ber.pa.*212.

on and accepting of the tables of the covenant is an undoubted token of a people in covenant or confederate, but every society professing the true and entire faith, joyning in prayer and thankesgiving, receiving the truth of God to dwell among them, and in some measure conforming themselves to the obedience of Gods Commandements, is in covenant with God. It is simply necessary to the being of a Church that it be laid upon Christ the foundation, which being done, the remaining of what is forbidden, or the want of what is commanded, cannot put the society from the title or right of a Church. For Christ is the foundation and head corner stone of the Church, and a people comming unto Christ, united unto him, built upon him, having communion with him and growing up in him, are the true Church of God: and if the seals be annexed to the covenant by God himselfe, as we cannot deny a people in covenant to be the Church, so we must not deny their right and title to the Sacraments. If therefore the meaning of the proposition be, that the seales be given to the Church, that is, to true and sound Christians, and people in covenant with God, as a priviledge whether in ordinary or extraordinary dispensation we accept it as good and sound, but it makes against your judgement and practice in keeping away such as have right and title to the ordinances. If you meane the seales are given to the Church, that is, onely to set members of some particular society combined by covenant (as it is among you) we cannot receive it, because it implieth a distinction not taught in Scripture, and crosse to your selves. And for the thing it selfe the Scripture hath nothing but many things against it as hath beene shewed.

5 If it be granted that the seales are the prerogative of a particular visible Church, known and approved Christians among us, and their seed are members of true and visible Churches, and so to be esteemed among you before they be entred into Church membership as you call it. For every society professing the intire and true faith, and joyning together in the right use of the Sacraments in matters substantiall is the true Church of God, and every visible beleever receiving the word and professing the true intire faith, admitted to the right and lawfull participation of the Sacraments is a visible member of the true Church, if he have neither renounced that society, nor deserved justly to be cast out by excommunication or Church censure. For the intire profession of the truth, the dwelling of the truth among men, the right use of the Sacraments (which is ever joyned with truth of Doctrine, and to be esteemed by it) is proper to them that be in covenant with God, And they that truly partake of the Seales must needes be of a Church, for the seales are not without but within the Church an ordinance given unto it, and if they be true members of the true Churches of Jesus Christ, other Churches, are bound to hold communion with them in the ordinance of worship as divine providence shall minister occasion.

*See Mr. I. D. Apol. 11. Sect. exam p.*117.

In

In answer to the ninth position you say the members of other Churches, well known and approved by vertue of communion with Churches, doe mutually and with good acceptance communicate each of them at others Churches, even so often as Gods providence leads them thereunto, and themselves desire it. In your preface to this consideration, you say you admit to fellowship of the seales, the known, approved, and orderly recommended members of any true Church, and if knowne and approved Christians, members of our Churches comming over into *New England*, shall desire either to have their children baptized, or to be admitted themselves to the Lords Supper before they be set members of any society there, we desire to know upon what grounds from God you can deny them, if you acknowledge our Churches, Ministery, and Sacraments, to be true and of God (as you professe) and the members of the Church be known and approved, orderly recommended unto you.

It is the priviledge of Christians baptised themselves, and walking in the faith, that their children should have right to baptisme in all true Churches in the world. It is the priviledge of Christians lawfully and justly admitted to the Lords Supper in one visible Church, and walking in covenant with God, that they have right to this priviledge in all Churches professing their intire faith, and you must shew just and sound reasons from God of your judgement and practice in debarring their seed from baptisme, and parents themselves from the Supper, or else (to use the words of a reverend Elder among you, in a case of lesse importance, and not concerning so many) you will be found guilty of adding to the words, and making eleven Commandements, and setting up humane customes, and selfewill against Gods appointment. For the Sacraments are given to the Church as a priviledge peculiar thereunto, but you deny this priviledge to the true visible members of the Church, (as your selves confesse.) For if the Ministers be the Ministers of Christ, and their congregations the Churches of Christ, then knowne and approved Christians are members of the Church. In your opinion the members of the Jewish Church might be received unto baptisme, upon confession of the Christian faith, before they were entred into Church fellowship, and it is more then strange to us that you should not thinke the true visible members of the Churches of Christ to have as much title and interest to the Seales, as the members of the Jewish Church to the Sacrament of Baptisme.

I. D. Apol. 5. Sect. exam. pag. 61, & 18.

6 The distinct Churches mentioned in the New Testament, it is not certain that they were congregationall societies consisting onely of so many as might and did meete together ordinarily in one place at one time for the publike worship of God, and their own edification, and if this were granted it would not carry the weight that was laid upon it, But because it may make way for the clearing of some other

points pertaining to discipline and Church orders, we intreat leave to set downe, and desire you to examine what may be objected against it. We will not insist upon this that the least circuite wherein there is mention of Churches, is ample enough to containe some dioceses, and the least City, populous enough to make many numbersome congregations. Nor upon this, that to meete at one time and one place, as one assembly is a thing meerely accidentary to the unity of the Church and society Ecclesiasticall which is still one, when they are dispersed asunder, and no particular man of that society at first remaining now alive. The number of beleevers was so great in some Cities as they could not conveniently meete in one place as one assembly to worship the Lord according to his will and for their edifying. That there was a Church gathered in the City of *Samaria* by the ministery of *Phillip* will not be denyed, for they received the word and were baptised, but that the Church in that City was onely a congregationall assembly is more then can probably be concluded out of Scripture. For the whole City or the greatest part could not ordinarily assemble in one place to their edification: But the whole City of *Samaria*, in a manner, (as it is probable) imbraced the faith. As the whole City from the least to the greatest had given heede to *Simon Magus* before, so to *Phillip* now when he preached Christ. And the Text saith expresly that *Samaria* received the Gospell.

Bucer diss. ep 3 pa 43 & ep 48. pa. 226.

Act. 8.6. & 15 4

Act 8 12.14. & 18.12.

The Christian Church at *Ierusalem* was one and distinct, but it grew and increased first to 3000. then to 5000. afterwards multitudes of men and women were added, and the multitude of Disciples increased; it is also noted that a company of the Priests received the faith. The Syriacke hath it of the Jews, (*scil.*) inhabiting Judea, but the *Greeke*, *Arabian*, vulgar, *Chrisostoms* & *Ethiopians* approve the former, and the number of the Priests was not small: there is mention also of millions of beleevers. And when all the Apostles, or the greatest part of them remained at Jerusalem for a time continuing in the ministery of the word and prayer, and that they might doe it the more earnestly and diligently, left the care of the poore to others: how can we thinke but that Church did grow exceedingly, and the number of beleevers there to be more then could fitly meete ordinarily in one congregation. Without question the number of beleevers in *Antioch* was not small, of which it is said expresly, that a great number beleeved, turned to the Lord and that a great multitude was added to the Lord by the preaching of *Barnabas*, and that *Paul* and *Barnabas* continued there one whole yeere preaching the word of God, and teaching the multitude, so that the Disciples were first called Christians at *Antioch*. After that this Church was visited by *Paul* and

Acts 2. 41. & 4.4. & 5 14. & 6.1. & 6.7

Ezra. 2. 36, 37, 38.

Act. 6.2 & 8.1. 15. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23 & 16.4. & 21 18.18.

Act. 11. 21.

Act. 11 24 26

*Act.*13 12 *et* 14 27 *et* 15.30 34.35. and *Barnabas*, who continued there teaching and preaching the Word of God with many others also, and may wee not thinke that this Church did quickly rise to such bignesse that they could not well assemble in one congregation as now wee call them?

It will easily be credited that the number of believers was not small at *Ephesus*, if we call to minde that when *Paul* had been there but two yeers, all they that dwelt in *Asia* had heard the word of the Lord both *Iews* and *Grecians*, that a great doore and effectuall was opened to him at *Ephesus*, That the art for making Shrines, and *Dianaes* Temple was in danger to be set at nought, and that those that had used curious arts, came and burnt their books in the sight of all men, which could not be done without great danger unto the Church, unlesse a great part of the City had believed. Where a Church did comprehend a City with its Suburbs and the Country circumjacent, *i.e.* the believers who professed the faith within that circuit. It might well be that the number did so increase through the extraordinary blessing of God, which accompanied the preaching of the word in those primitive times, and first planting of the heavenly Kingdome, that they could not well meet ordinarily in one place, and yet continued one Society. For when a number is gathered in small Villages, or some added to the number already gathered, it is not meet they should be neglected because small, nor divided from the body, because the number not competent to make an intire and perfect body of it selfe. The increase of the Churches doth require an increase of Elders, and (if they grow to bignesse more then ordinary) an increase of places for their assembling, when the essence of the visible Church is not changed, nor one multiplied or divided into many. And it is more available for the good of the Church, and further removed from all ambition, if the Society shall assemble occasionally in divers places as parts and members of the body, then to constitute a distinct free Society consisting of a few Believers, not fit to make up an intire body contrary to the precedent examples of the Apostles. In times of grievous and hot persecution the Churches of God could not assemble in any great number in publick places, but have been compelled to meet in Woods, Caves, Dens, and dark corners, as the Lord hath offered opportunity, one and the same Society in sundry places: So that either it is not essentiall to the Church to meet together in one place ordinarily, or their Society is broken off by persecution, when their meeting together in one place is interrupted. It is said by some where the Church grew greater, sometimes by the suddain and extraordinary conversion of more then could well so assemble, then was there presently a dispersion of the former, and a multiplication of more particular Assemblies. But in the Scriptures quoted no such thing doth appeare, but rather the contrary

Acts 19 10. & 16.9 & 29 27. *Acts* 19 19.

Robinson against *Bern* p. 196.

Euseb hist l.6 c.35. Lat 43. Grec 33. Ruff.

trary as hath been proved. In aftertimes when the Church was within the Cities as of *Rome, Ephesus, Alexandria, Carthage, Ierusalem, &c.* the number of Believers did greatly exceed the bigneſſe of a convenient and fitting aſſembly which might ordinarily congregate in one place to worſhip God according to his appointment when the Church was but one.

Seventhly, Seeing then both the Seals in ordinary and in extraordinary diſpenſation belong to the Church, *id eſt*, to the faithfull, and repentant, taught made Diſciples, who have received the word, believe, and profeſſe the faith, have received the holy Ghoſt, and walke in obedience, who are members of other viſible Churches, or to be made members of a viſible Church for the time being, by admittance unto the Sacraments, and not unto ſet members of congregationall aſſemblies only. And ſeeing the godly and faithfull Miniſters among us are the true Miniſters of Chriſt, and their godly congregations, true Churches, and knowne, and approved Chriſtians, true members of viſible Churches formerly baptized, and admitted to the Lords Supper. This conſideration is of no weight to juſtifie your opinion and practice in debarring known and approved Chriſtians, profeſſing the faith, members of the true viſible Churches amongſt us from the Lords Supper, or their ſeed from Baptiſme, becauſe they be not yet received as ſet members of ſome particular cõgregation amongſt you: And if ſuch Believers are not to be received to the Seals, we deſire you to conſider if ever the Sacraments of the New Teſtament, were rightly diſpenſed in the Church of the New Teſtament from the firſt Plantation thereof unto this day.

The Seale doth follow the grant, and as the Seale is prophaned, if it be put to a falſe grant or Charter, ſo are the faithfull wronged if the Seale in a lawfull way deſired, be denied to them that have received the grant, *i.e.* have right unto Jeſus Chriſt, and communion with him. But the faithfull who have received the word with gladneſſe, believe, and profeſſe, be members knowne and approved by other viſible Churches, or ſuch as deſire to be admitted members of that viſible Society for the time by communicating in the ordinance, are already partakers of the grant or charter, have right and intereſt in Chriſt, may lawfully deſire the Seals, and may be admitted as members for the time being of that particular Society. Therefore to debar ſuch, from the Lords Supper, and their ſeed from Baptiſme, is againſt the Law of nature, and the poſitive Law of God, an injury to the faithfull and their ſeed, a wrong to the Catholike viſible Church, that particular ſociety, and the Paſtors themſelves that ſo debar them. They ſinned grievouſly who deferred Baptiſme to the end of their life, and the negligence of Paſtors and Teachers who did not inſtruct the ignorant and reprove the ſuperſtitious, was great. And is not the ſeverity in debarring ſuch as crave and deſire to be admitted to the Seals an injury to be repre-

v. bit de Sacra contr. de bapt. qu 2. & 3. pag 237,238.

Atterſ. of the Sacr: l.2 c 6 fol.211.

Rezi de Preſbyt pag.79.

hended?

Anſw.

Answ. 2 Confider the ordinary administration of the Seales is limited to the miniſtery and the miniſtery to a particular Church; therefore the ſeals alſo muſt neceſſarily be proper to the Church and to the members thereof.

1 That the administration of the ſeales is limited to their Miniſtery is evident from the firſt inſtitution *Math.* 28. 19. where God hath joyned (to preach) *viz.* by office, and (to baptize) together, therefore wee may not ſeparate them. For howſoever: any man may by the appointment of the Lord and Maſter of the family, ſignifie his minde and deliver his meſſage from him to the family, yet the diſpenſing of a fitt portion of food to everie one of the houſhold is a branch of the ſtewards office. Indeed the keies are given to the whole Church yet the exerciſe and diſpenſation of them in this as well as in other particulars is concredited to the Miniſters who are called to bee οἰκόνομοι μυςηρίων θεῦ, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. And no Church office can be orderly performed by any, but one that is called thereunto nor will God vouchſafe his preſence, and bleſſing (wherupon all ſpirituall efficacy depends) in an ordinance diſpenſed, but when it is diſpenſed by thoſe whom he hath ordayned and appointed therunto.

2 That the miniſtery is limited to the Church appeares as from evident texts of Scripture: ſo alſo upon this ground. 1 The office is founded in the relation betweene the Church and the officer, wherfore take away the relation, and the office and the worke ceaſeth.

Act. 14 23 *Col.* 4. 17 1 *Pet* 5. 2 *Act* 20, 28.

For where he hath not power, he may not doe an act of power, and he hath no powerwhere he hath not a relation by office. Herein the proportion holdeth between an officer of a towne corporate, and of a Church that as the power of the former is only within his owne corporation: ſo the power of the latter is confined to his owne congregation.

Reply.

THe propoſition is granted that the diſpenſation of the Sacraments in the New Teſtament both ordinary and extraordinary is limited to the Miniſtery. But in that you alleadge for confirmation, ſomethings may be noted.

1 The firſt inſtitution of Baptiſme is not contained in that paſſage *Math.* 28. 19. but confirmed; For the ſeales of the New Teſtament were inſtituted by Chriſt before his death, and his diſciples had baptized many which they could not doe before the inſtitution of the Sacrament. Secondly we ſee not how you can apply that text to Preaching by office, which according to our expoſition muſt bee a diſpenſing of a fit portion of food to everie one of the houſhould. For it is plaine the Apoſtles were ſent forth to preach to everie Creature or unto the world, to convert men unto God, to make them diſciples and not to preach unto diſciples only, or members of the houſhould. The Apoſtles certainly had authority, and preached by authority, but

Ioh. 4. 2. & 23 23.

Mark. 9. 25. *Act* 17 22 23 32. & 19 8, 9

but they preached not to Infidells and Heathens, as to disciples or members of the Church, much lesse did they give a portion to them as to the household which is the preaching by office, which you acknowledge. Thirdly if under the power of the keyes you comprehend preaching by office, dispensing the seales, casting out, and receiving againe into the bosome of the Church wee deny the power of the keyes to belong to the Church or community of the faithfull: we cannot find in Scripture that Christ ever granted such power to the faithfull, as faithfull joyned together in Covenant in those passages which speake of this power, the execution of this authority is given to them to whom the authoritie is committed.

Rob against *Ecnp* 151 these Keyes in d. &c.

In the Corporation (the Church) there is alwayes the whole power of Christ to residing, which you may call officers for the use of it selfe, to which it is sufficient that it can without officers use this power for things simply necessary; as for receiving in of members by profession of faith and confession of sins, for edifying of them by exhortation and comforts in the ordinance of propheſying, and so for excommunication. *Rob.* against *B. pag.* 224.

If the power of the keyes be given to the whole Church the Apostles themselves must derive their authoritie immediatly from the Church, and not from Christ, for the power must be derived from them, unto whom it was given; but their power, and authority was not from the Church, but from Christ immediatly. And if the dispensation, and exercise of the keyes, be concredited to the Ministers; Doth it hold in all things or onely in the dispensation of the Sacraments, and preaching by office? Doe they dispense the seales as the Stewards of Christ, from whom they receive their authority immediately or as the servants of the Church, from which they derive their authority? If in the first sense; the power of the keys is not in the community of the faithfull. If in the second, the office of a Minister is not the immediate gift of Christ, nor the Minister, so much the servant of Christ, as of the Church, from whom he must receive lawes, in whose name he must doe his office, and to whom he must give an account. We could wish you had explained in what sense, you hold the dispensation, and execution of the power of the keyes is concredited to the Ministers, and by whom. For if the community of the faithfull have to doe in all matters concerning the body, to admit members, and cast them out, to make and depose Ministers, to bind and loose by authority derived from Christ, wee cannot see how in your judgement the dispensation, and execution of the power of the keyes is concredited to the Ministers.

See *Rob.* against *Ber. pag.* 130. 131. 132 If you call it consultation in an assembly wherein all have equall power and voyce in determining things some one going before the rest *Idem pag* 202

Fourthly That which you add, that God will not vouchsafe his presence and blessing to an ordinance but when it is dispenced by those, whom hee hath ordayned and appointed thereunto, must bee warily understood, or it may occasion errors and distractions

not

not a few, You know what corruptions soone entred into the Church of God, both in respect of Doctrine, Worship, Offices, and entrance thereunto, and how ready and apt is the conclusion from your words, That Christ hath not vouchsafed his presence, and blessing in his Ordinances to his Church? But of this before.

Robins. against *Bern* Coun. debated, *p.* 32. *ibid. p.* 79.

And on the contrary, seeing God hath vouchsafed his blessing in his Ordinances dispensed by your selves, when you stood as visible Ministers in the congregation, and Churches of old *England*, you must confesse, did approve both your standings and his Ordinances dispensed by you.

Secondly, as for the Assumption, that Pastors and Teachers are limited to a particular charge or society; but that flock is not ever one congregationall assembly meeting in one place, neither the band so streight, whereby they are tied to that one society, that they may not upon occasion performe some Ministeriall Act or Office in another congregation, or to them that be not set members of their proper assembly. For first to dispence the Seals of the covenant is a ministeriall act, an act of Office, and not an exercise of gifts onely: But the Pastors of one Assembly may dispence the Sacrament to the set members of another society upon occasion, as you confesse in this and in your answer to the ninth position.

And if the members of one Church may lawfully upon occasion receive the Sacrament of the Supper in another society from the Pastor thereof, then may the Pastor of one congregation performe a Ministeriall act to the members of another, and if to the members of another then in another congregation with consent, and upon occasion.

Secondly, As the Ministers are exhorted to feed their flock: so is every Christian and Minister to try and examine himselfe whether hee be in the faith, but you will not allow this conclusion. I must examine my self. *Ergo*, no man is debarred from the Sacrament for his unworthinesse, or to be tried or examined by others, to be observed, admonished, and brought to repentance for notorious sin. No more can it be rightly gathered from the former passages of Scripture, that the Minister is not upon occasion to performe any Ministeriall act to any other people or society, becaus ordinarily he is to attend his own flock.

1 *Cor.* 11 28. 2 *Cor.* 2 3. 9.

Beza de Presbyt. & *Excom. pag.* 32. *Robins.* against *Bern. pag.* 252.

Thirdly, As the Ministers have peculiar relation to their particular flocks, so the people unto their particular Ministers, unto whom they are tied in speciall manner, as to their Overseers, who must give account for their souls. And if this peculiar relation betwixt the people & the Minister doth not hinder the people from receiving the Lords Supper at the hands of another Minister; nor the minister from performing the Ministeriall act to the members of another congregation. Neither doth his peculiar Relation to his own flock hinder him, from administring unto others.

others upon just occasion being intreated thereunto. As the combining of the people to their peculiar Minister, doth not quite cut off their communion with other Ministers: so neither doth the restraining of a Minister to a peculiar flock quite cut him off from administring upon occasion unto another people. *Paul* appointeth the *Ephesian* Elders unto the care & charg onely of their own particular flock, but so to attend them ordinarily according to the rules of the Scripture; that as occasion was offered, might performe some Ministeriall acts in another congregation. The taking heed unto their flocks which *Paul* requires in this place doth cōprehend under it the administration of the Word, Prayer, and Sacrament, and if it must be restrained to their owne particular Churches onely, it is unlawfull for a Pastor to preach or call upon the name of God in any publike Assembly save his own, upon any occasion, as these be duties prtaining to common confession or profession of faith. Ordinary Pastors and Teachers it is true, are not Apostles, who are to go from place to place, from Country to Country, to plant and erect Churches, but they are tied ordinarily to one flock, as the Text proveth, and to which purpose it is commonly cited. But that a Pastor is so tied to his flock, that he can perform no ministeriall act to any other upon any occasion that it proveth not, nor can we find that it was ever so understood by Divines ancient or modern. *W. B.* telleth us, the learned bring these allegations to this purpose. But the authour in alledging the consent of the learned was very careless or much abused, for there is not one that speaketh to the purpose. *I. D.* disclaimeth that position; and for the rest it is a matter notorious, they were never thought to be of that opinion; and wee doubt not if any could be named to free this allegation from suspition of Novelty, you would have cited one or more as you have done in that which followeth.

Acts 20 28. The Word of God and Canons of Councels will have Pastors so to care for their own flock, that they forbid them not to care for the whole Church, especially in a time of common combustion. The answer of some Brethren, *pag* 12.
Publica Dei invocatio non minima pars communis in unâ fide consensionis. Beza *contra* Erastum, *de Presbyt. pap.* 13.

Euseb. Hist. 5. *c.* 26. *Græc.* *Chamier. Panst. Tom* 2. *l.* 10. *c.* 8. *Sect.* 16. The Churches Plea, *pag.* 44. *Apol pag.* 117. & 298.

Feed the flock of God (saith *Peter.*) But he speaks of all those dispersed Churches to whom he writes, which he calls a chosen Generation, a Royall Priesthood, a peculiar people: And in some respect of reason, under which we may apprehend them, are one flock, but not really as combined under the same Pastor, or meeting in one place. And as these dispersed believers, or societies make one Flock: so the Ministers attending their flocks or societies, and the Ministery exercised by them is, or maketh one.

4 A Minister chosen and set over one society, is to looke unto his people committed to his charge, *and feed the flock over which the Lord hath made him overseer,* but

but he is a Minister in the Church Universall, for as the Church is one, so is the Ministery one, of which every Minister (sound or Orthodox) doth hold his part; and though he be Minister over that flock onely which he is to attend, yet he is a Minister in the universal Church. The functiō or power of exercising that Function in the abstract, must be distinguished from the power of exercising it, concretely, according to the divers circumstances of places. The first belongeth to a Minister every where in the Church, the latter is proper to the place and people where he doth minister. The lawfull use of his power is limited to that congregation ordinarily. The power it self is not so limited and bounded. In Ordination, Presbyters are not restrained to one or other certaine place, as if they were to be deemed Ministers there onely, though they be set over a certain people. And as the faithfull in respect of a community betwixt them, must and ought to performe the Offices of love one to another, though of different societies, so the Ministers in respect of their communion, must and ought upon occasion to performe ministeriall Offices towards the faithfull of distinct societies.

Orig. *in* Isa. *Hom.* 6. *Qui vocatur ad Episcopatum, vocatur ad servitutem totius Ecclesiæ.* Chrysost. *in* 2 *Cor. hom.* 18. *Universæ curam gerimus.* See *Cham Panstr. Tom.* 2. *pag.* 10. *cap.* 12. *Sect.* 8, 9, 10. *&c.* Jun. *Animadv. in Bellar. contro.* 5. *lib.* 1. *c.* 3. *not.* 3. *& cap.* 7 *not.* 7.

5 If this be not so, what shall become of the poore flock when the Pastor is driven away by personall persecution, so that he cannot, if others may not afford them helpe and succour: what when the congregation it selfe is dispersed, must no sheepherd receive them into fold, when they are driven from their own, or neglected by him?

6 If the Pastor may be absent from his flock upon necessary, just, and weighty occasion, respecting his own good, the good of that society, or the common good of Churches consociate, then may the Pastor, the society, the Churches procure some man to supply the defect, and doe the office of a Pastor, preach the Word, pray, and as occasion is offered, administer the Sacrament in that Congregation unto that Assembly untill their Sheepheard shall returne. Shall the people be left as sheepe without a sheepheard; becaus for the good of the Churches their owne sheepheard is called from them for a time, that he might returne with greater joy and comfort?

The Pastor is appointed to feed his own flock, and yet for the good of the whole Church he may be called to leave, if not the care, yet the over-sight of his flock for a while; and by the same reason a pastor of another flock or congregation may performe the office, and doe the acts of a Minister in his congregation during absence: Yea if for the good of the Churches he be called away, doe not the Churches stand obliged in conscience to provide that the flock sustain no hurt by his absence which

possibly yee cannot doe if one Minister may not performe a Ministeriall act in another Congregation.

7 If the Prophets of one Church may prophesy in another, and apply their doctrines, exhortations and prayers to any of the occasions of the Churches where they speake, whereof they are not set members, what hinders why the Pastor of one congregation, may not preach and pray, administer the Sacraments in another? The pastor of one congregation is appointed to his peculiar charge, but he is a Minister in the universall Church, as well as the Prophets of one Church may bee called Prophets of the universall Church by vertue of that Communion which all true Churches have one with another. Without consent the Prophet may not prophesie by exhortation, and with consent the Pastor may administer the Sacraments.

Act. 13. 15.

8 In the Primitive Churches when Elders were ordained in every City, they were not onely to looke to their flock but indeavour the conversion of poore Infidels among whom they lived, and the inlargement of Christs Kingdome, for the worke of the Lord must be done in its season, and then was the time of the calling of the Gentiles.

Rom. 16 3.12. *Phil.* 2.15,16. *&* 4. 2.

It was not their office proper and essentiall to travail from Countrey to Countrey as did the Apostles, nor were they pastors of the Infidels, but by private instruction and publique teaching (if any of them would bee penitent) they were to labour the comming of them to God. And these Infidels converted to the faith were to be baptised of the Elders ordinarily in those Cities, though the number might bee so great as they could not well meete in one Congregation, nor be subject to the same Pastor; for either they must bee baptized by the pastors among whom they lived, (being converted to the faith) or continue unbaptized untill they were a number convenient to make a distinct society, or grow together into one body, and to elect and choose their own Minister by whom they may be baptised: But that either they must stay so long without baptisme, or that a society of unbaptised men had power in those times to elect and choose their Minister, by whom they should be baptised is contary to all presidents in Scripture.

Lam 5. 19,20. *Act.* 4. 26.40 *&* 9 38. & 10. 5. & 11. 19. 21 1 *Cor.* 14. 23, 24. *Esay* 2. 3, *Ezr.* 8. 23. *Ier.* 41. 45. & 42. 9. & 12. 20. *Revel.* 3. 9

9 And so if a Pastor may not performe a ministeriall act to any other person or people but his own flock onely, then a company newly converted from infidelity, which cannot joyne themselves as set members to another assembly, must remain unbaptised till they have chosen their Minister to doe that office. Then must the people thus converted want officers til there be among themselves able men to pray, preach, exhort in the congregation at the ordination of their Minister, or (if that may

may bee omitted) till there be fit men among them to examine the fitnesse of him that is chosen.

10 If subtile Heretikes arise, and seduce, and draw away many from the faith, and the body of the society be not able to convince them, either they must be let alone or cast out without conviction, for neighbouring Ministers stand in peculiar relation to their flocks onely, and must not meddle beyond their calling according to your tenent.

11 There is no precept or example in Scripture more to warrant the admitting of a set member of one congregation unto the Supper in another, or the baptising of his child, occasionally in another assembly then there is for receiving of knowne and approved Christians, and their seede that are not set members. The Pastor is no more the pastor of the one then of the other, nor the one more of his flock then the other, neither of them set members, and both sorts may be members for the time being, and they most properly who are of longest abode among them. But as we marke it is frequent among you (as at *Dorchester, &c.*) to baptise the children of another Assembly, and usually you admit to the Supper of the Lord members of other Churches, and therefore the Minister is not so limited to his particular Church or flock but he may dispence the seales to others, which in this consideration is denyed.

What example have you but grounds for the baptising of infants? or where read you of any officer excommunicated by any *Rob.* against *Bar.* p. 214. we may not expect examples of any Pastors in scriptures: who did thus. *I. D. Apol. 9. Sect. exam p.* 103.

See I. D. Apol. 9. sect. exam pa. 288.

12 If the want of one Officer in a Congregation for a time, may be supplyed by another, as the want of the Doctor, Ruling Elder, or Deacon, by the Pastor; why may not the defects of some Congregation or Christians be supplyed by Pastors or Ministers of another Congregation, when they are requested and desired? the minde herein is godly, and the means lawfull, and well pleasing unto God.

13 And if a Synod consisting of sundry members of particular Churches, met together in the name of Christ about the common and publike affaires of the Churches shall joyn together in prayer and communion of the Supper, wee can see no ground to question it as unlawfull, although that Assembly be no particular Congregation or Church, hath no Pastor over them, make not one Ecclesiasticall body as a particular Congregationall Church, unlesse it be for the time onely. The Minister therefore may do an act of office to them that be not set members of his flock as he may stand in Relation to them for the time.

14 Your comparison betwixt an Officer of a Town Corporate, and of a particular Congregation is not alike, unlesse you will say that a member of another Corporation occasionally comming into the Towne, is thereby a member of that Society, and subject to the authority of the Officer. For so you professe that the

members of one Society may occasionally communicate with another, and so be subject to the Pastor for the time being, which if you grant, it overthrows the whole strength of this consideration. Howsoever the comparison it selfe is very perilous if it be pressed. For if the Officer of a Town Corporate, presume to doe an act of power out of his owne Corporation, it is a meer nullity, but if a Minister of the Gospell dispence the Sacrament of Baptisme, or the Lords Supper to believers of another Society (though done without consent) it was never deemed or judged a nullity in the Church of God. Let the comparison hold good, and most Christians have cause to question whether they be truly baptized, or ever lawfully received the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. If it may not be doubted, whether ever the Sacraments of the New Testament were truly or by authority dispenced, especially if we consider what follows in the other considerations. This Argument from comparison is very usuall in the Writings of Brethren against communion with our Churches, but for the most part greatly mistaken, to say no more.

Answer 3 Consideration.

CIrcumcision and the Passoever were to be administred onely to the members of the Church. *Ergo*, Baptisme and the Lords Supper is so to be administred also. The consequence is made good by the parity of these Ordinances. For if the Argument hold strong for the proofe of *Pædo-Baptism*, which is taken from the circumcision of Infants, why may we not as well infer a necessity of Church membership to Baptisme, from the necessity of it to circumcision. And that Circumcision was peculiar to the Church members of the Church, may appeare in that persons circumcised & onely they, might eat the Passeover, and they onely might enter into the Temple, which were the privi'edges of Church members. In our answer to the second Objection against the first consideration we have shewed that Circumcision was not administred to all that were under the Covenant of Grace (which all believers were) but onely such of them as joyned themselves to the Church, at first in *Abrahams* family, whereunto Baptisme doth so far answer that the Apostle counteth these expresse equivalent to be circumcised in Christ with circumcision made without hands, and to be buried with Christ in Baptisme. Indeed, in somethings they differ as onely the Males were circumcised, whereas with us Females are also baptized. The Reason is because God hath limited Circumcision to the Males, but under the Gospel that difference is taken away. Againe, Circumcision was administred in the private family; but Baptisme, onely in the publick Assemblies of the Church. The Reason of this difference is, because they were bound to circumcise the Males on the eighth day, but that could not stand with going to the Temple which was too far off, for the purpose, to bring every child thither from all parts of *Judea* to be Circumcised the eighth day. Nor had they alway opportunity of a solemne convention in the Synagogue on every eighth day; when some child

Exod. 12 48.
Exod. 44 7.
Col 2.11,12.

child or other might be to be circumcised. But there is no precise day set downe for Baptisme, nor are opportunities of publick Assemblies so remote where Churches are kept in a congregationall frame, but that every first day of the week Baptisme may be administred if it be required. Again, for the Aforesaid Reason, Circumcision required not a peculiar Minister (for ought we finde in Scripture) but it is not so in Baptisme, as was shewd in the second Consideration. But no good Reason can be given, why, in this they should not both agree, *viz.* that they are both to be dispensed onely to members of the visible Church, as it hath been proved in the first Consideration.

Reply.

THis whole Reason as it is propounded makes onely against it selfe; who ever thought that the Seals of the Covenant were not proper to confederates or the Church of God? But of old all visible Believers under the Covenant of Grace, walking in holinesse, were of the visible Church, and in Church Order according to the dispensation of those times, though not joyned in externall society with the Family of *Abraham*. And to exclude *Melchisedeck* or *Iob*, because they were no members of the visible Church, when yet they were visible Believers under the Covenant of Grace, and in Church Order as those times required, is well-nigh a contradiction, And so it is to debar known and approved Christians members of our Congregation, and their seed from the Seals, because they be not of the visible Church, for they are members of the Church, and so to bee held and esteemed all true Churches and members of the Church, The true & proper meaning of this Consideration, is that as Circumcision and the Passeover were not to be dispensed to all visible Believers under the Covenant of Grace, but onely to such as were joyned to *Abrahams* Family, or to the people of the God of *Abraham*, no more may Baptisme and the Lords Supper be administred to any Believers now, unlesse they be joyned to some particular Congregation in Church Membership, or unlesse by solemne Covenant, they be set members of some particular Assemblies.

The strength of this Consideration stands in the parity which is betwixt the Sacraments of the Old and New Testament, Circumcision and Baptisme, for *parum par est ratio*, but this parity is not found in every thing (as is manifest by the particulars alleadged in the Consideration it self.) And wee must justly require some reason to prove them like in that particular, but to unfold it more fully, we will consider three things. First, how far an argument may be drawn soundly from one Sacrament to another, or wherein the Sacraments agree, and wherein they differ. Secondly, What wee are to think of the proposition it self. Thirdly, whether the Reason of Circumcision and Baptisme be one in that particular.

Erast so objects against *Bern. Sicut a Circumcisione ad Baptismum argumentamur ut probemus infantes esse baptizandos; ita etiam licet ab agno Paschatis ad Cœnam Domini, &c.* whereto hee truly replyeth. *Ego vero, non nego licere &c. at non temere & universaliter.* Beza *contra* Erast. *pag.* 23.

First the Sacraments of the old Testament and the new agree in their Common author, nature and end, and therfore what is spoken of one in respect of the common author, nature and end that doth hold true of everie one. If Circumcision be of divine institution a seale of the Righteousnesse of faith, and of the Covenant of grace, a Sacrament in generall is an ordinance divine, a seale of the Covenant proper and peculiar to them that bee confederates. But what is peculiar to one Sacrament that agreeth not to another. What is proper to the sacraments of the old Testament, in respect of the manner of dispensation that agreeth not to the new, as if the Sacraments of the old Testament be with bloud, obscure in signification, painfull for use, peculiar to one Nation, and to bee abolished, the Sacraments of the new Testament must be without bloud, cleere for signification, easie for use, universall to all Nations, and perpetuall to continue in the Church for ever.

Circumcision and Baptisme are both Sacraments of divine institution, and so they agree in the substance of the things signified, the persons to whom they are to bee administred, and the order of administration, if the right proportion bee observed. As circumcision sealed the entrance into the covenant the righteousnesse of faith, and circumcision of the heart: so doth Baptisme much more clearly: As *Abraham* and his household, and the infants of beleiving Iews were to be circumcised, so the faithful, their families, and their seed are to bee baptized. None must eate the passeover who was not circumcised, women excepted, who were circumcised in the males. Nor may a man unbaptized be admitted to the Lords supper. Circumcision was but once applied by Gods appointment and the same holds in baptisme according to the will and good pleasure of God: But circumcision and baptisme agree not in their speciall forme, and manner of dispensation appointed of God. And in these things a reason cannot be drawn from the one to the other affirmatively. The males onely were to be circumcised as only capable of that signe: but males and females both ought to be baptized. The infants males were to be circumcised the eighth day becaus seaven dayes they were legally uncleane. But the seed of the faithfull are not to bee reputed uncleane. *Ergo*, no set tyme is appointed for baptisme. Circumcision as other Ceremonies did distinguish the Iewes from the Gentiles; but Christ now of two hath made one. Circumcision signified Christ to come, Baptisme is the seale of the New covenant made in Christ already come. And so in the degree of grace given, some difference may be put: The other differences alleadged in the considerations with the reasons thereof are not so cleere and undoubted: for Baptisme is not tyed to the first day of the weeke: and the Jewes might gather an Assembly on the eighth day as occasion required, and it might be appropriated to the Priests and *Levites* though done in private: But in whatsoever they agree or differ we must looke to the institution and neither stretch it wider, nor draw it narrower then the Lord hath made it. For hee is the Institutor of the Sacraments according to his owne

Lev. 12. 2. 3. & 22. 27 *Exo.* 22. 30,

Eph. 2 15.

owne good pleasure. And it is our part to learne of him, both to whom, how, and for what end the Sacraments are to be administred, how they agree, and wherein they differ. In all which we must affirme nothing but what God hath taught us, and as he hath taught us.

Secondly, as for the Proposition it selfe; certaine it is, Circumcision and the Passeover were to be administred onely to the visible members of the Church, *i.e.* to men in Covenant, professing the true faith; But that in *Abrahams* time none were visible members of the Church, which joyned not themselves in Church orders to the family of *Abraham*, wee have not learned. In the first Institution of Circumcision, we find that God gave it to *Abraham*, as the Seale of the Covenant formerly made with him: But of any Church covenant or order whereunto *Abrahams* family should enter before Circumcision we read not. *Melchizedeck*, *Lot*, *Iob*, *&c.* were not onely visible Beleevers under the Covenant of grace, but visible members of the Church, according to the order and dispensation of those times. Wee read not (you say) that *Melchizedeck*, *Lot* or *Iob* were circumcised, but that is no good reason to inferre negatively that they were not Circumcised. We read not that *Iohn* the Baptist, or the Apostles, or the 500. brethren were Baptized, wee must not forthwith conclude, that they were not initiated by that seale. Moreover, if they were not Circumcised, it may bee the Institution of that Sacrament was not knowne unto them, or the Authour of Circumcision (upon whose will and pleasure they must depend) did not command it unto them, or require that they should joyne themselves in Covenant with *Abrahams* family: and in that case if they had Circumcised themselves they had transgressed. But then the reason why they were not circumcised was not this, that they were not (as you speake) in Church order: but because Circumcision was appropriated to *Abrahams* family by divine Institution in some speciall and peculiar respects belonging to the manner of Administration. After the Church of the Jewes was constituted (when wee can no more imagine that there was a Church among the Gentiles, then that there are Christians among the Barbarians at this day) we finde none must be admitted to the

Etiam si daremus nullam legi ab Apostolis excommunicationem non tamen sequeretur ita esse, quum satis constet non omnium singularia Apostolorum gesta perscripta fuisse. Bez. de Presb. p. 7. Et si de Melchizedeck & Iobo quæ huc adferuntur non sunt extra controversiam. Nam fœdere cum Abra. inito non excluduntur ij qui ante erant in fœdere sed accensentur fœderi. Ita autem se habuit Melchizedeck, &c. omnino enim consors promissionis divinæ fuit ante fœdus cum eo initum. Gen. 17. Iob vero & credens fuit promissionibus fœderis, & de sententia veterum fuit circumcisus etiam hæreditariâ circumcisione a paterno maternoq; sanguine. Vt elegantèr scribit author libri de verâ Circumcisione qui Hieron. adscribitur. Iun. animadv. in Bellar. contrav. 4. lib. 3. cha. 16. not. 13.

to circumcision, but that he professe the true faith, and avouch the God of *Abraham* to be his God, which of necessitie must be done before he could be reputed a visible Beleever, or under the Covenant of promise.

Thus a learned and reverend divine, Circumcision was a seale of the covenant, that God made with *Abraham* concerning Christ that should come as concerning the flesh of *Isaac* and so of *Iacob* of whom were the 12 tribes who were the Israelites, &c. *Rom.* 9. 4. 5. So that as in *Abrahams* time none were bound to be Circumcised but those that were of his family as being borne there or bought, and so brought thither which were not of his seed: So afterwards none were bound to be Circumcised which were not borne in the family of *Iacob* and *Patriarchs*, or joyned to them. And after their comming out of *Egypt* none were bound to be Circumcised but the children of the Iewes (then the only Church of God,) and those that desired to joyne unto them. The summe is thus much, God gave circumcision to *Abraham* as a seale of the Covenant but whether it was given to other beleevers in his time it is (at least) a thing uncertaine. And if they were not Circumcised it was by reason of the speciall Institution of God, and peculiar manner of administration of the Covenant of promise which in some respect was proper to the family of *Abraham*, and not common to all the visible members of the Church at that time in Church fellowship and order. Afterwards when there were none in covenant but the seed of *Iacob* or strangers professing the faith of *Abraham*, circumcision was not to be administred to any man who was not in Covenant nor any man to bee admitted to the Passeover who was not circumcised. This is the most that can be said with any probability: But hence it will not follow by iust analogie or proportion, that the seed of the faithfull must not bee admitted to Baptisme, or visible beleivers be received to the Lords Supper unlesse they bee set members of some particular congregation united in Church order. Thirdly, presupposing therefore that *Melchizedeck*, *Lot* and *Iob*, were not Circumcised, we say there is not the like reason of Circumcision and Baptisme in this particular. For, first if Circumcision was ever appropriated to the family of *Abraham*, and might be communicated to other visible Beleevers, it was in the first Institution and administration; but in the first Institution and administration of Baptisme, it was not observed that beleevers should be first gathered into a politicall body or Christian church membership, and then baptized. *Iohn* the Baptist baptized such as came to him confessing their sins. The Apostles baptized Disciples, such as gladly received their doctrine, beleeved in Jesus Christ, and received the gifts of the holy Ghost, before they were gathered into Christian Church order, or made fit members of a Christian congregationall Assembly.

Io. D. exam of tents p. 309.

Mat. 3. 7.

Io 4 2.

Act 2 37. 38. 41. & 8 37. & 10. 47. 48.

2 If Circumcision was by speciall Institution given as a priviledge to the Males of *Abrahams* Familie, *Melchizedecke*, *Iob*, Lot, and [illegible] not bound to joyne themselves as members

to *Abrahams* familie, or desire and seek to be circumcised: But they that have received the doctrine of salvation, beleeve Christ, and professe the faith, are bound to seek, and desire the priviledge of the seals in an holy manner.

3. *Melchizedech*, *Job*, and *Lot* were not onely visible beleevers, but visible members of the Church, according to the manner of dispensing in those times: but the Seals (as you confesse) belong to all beleevers knit together in Church-Covenant.

4. If circumcision be appropriated to the family of *Abraham*, it is because the Covenant sealed by circumcision is peculiar to *Abrahams* posteritie, (*sc.*) that Christ should come as concerning the flesh, of *Isaac*. But Baptisme is the seal of the Covenant of grace without any peculiar or speciall tye or respect.

5. You contend, that Baptisme did belong to such beleevers as were members of the then Jewish Church, which cannot stand, if *Abrahams* familie did answer to a Christian societie or congregationall Assembly; Just reason therefore may be given why circumcision was dispensed onely to the males of *Abrahams* familie, when baptisme is not to be limited onely to the set members of a particular societie; and if this consideration be applied to the purpose, instead of saying, Circumcision and the Passeover were to be administred onely to the members of the Church, you must say Circumcision was to be desired of or administred unto all the true approved visible members of the Church. And if there be the same reason of both, then all visible approved members of the Church must not desire nor be admitted to the seals, but this conclusion you will not acknowledge.

Answ. 4. *Consideration.*

THey that are not capable of the Church censures, are not capable of the Church priviledges: but they that are not within Church-Covenant are not capable of Church censures. *Ergo.* The proposition is evident, The Assumption may be proved, 1 *Corinth.* 5. 12. What have I to do to judge them that are without. Now to be without is not onely the case of Heathens and Excommunicates, but of some beleevers also, who though by externall union with Christ they are within the Covenant of grace, yet being not joyned externally to the visible bodie of Christ (a particular Church) are in regard of visible Church communion said to be without. To this purpose is this text alledged by other Divines also, as Dr. *Ames* Cas. of consci. *l.* 4. *c.* 24. *q.* 1. *resp.* 5.

Reply.

FIrst, men are capable of Church censures in two respects, either in having the power of the keyes, and authoritie to dispense them according to God, or as subject to the censures of the Church. In the first sense, many are capable of Church priviledges that are not capable of Church censures, as the seed of Christian parents, children and women. You say you admit to the seales the knowne

and approved, and orderly recommended members of any true Church: but to fellowship in the censures, admittance of members, and choice of Officers onely, the members of that particular Church whereof they and we (any of us) stand members. In the second sense also many are capable of Church priviledges who are not subject to Church censures: as the children of Christian parents are capable of baptisme, the known and approved members of any true Church are capable of the Seales in other Congregations among you who are not subject to the censures of that other Society. Spirituall communion in publick prayer is a Church priviledge, which is not denied to visible beleevers and godly persons, though not in Church order, and so not in subjection in your sense to Church censures.

Secondly, a person baptised is not baptised in that particular congregation onely, but into all Churches, and every particular Church where he cometh he hath all the priviledges of a baptised person in respect of his baptisme, and is so to be esteemed by them. Now the priviledge of a baptised person who is able to examine himself, and walketh in the truth, is to be admitted to the Lords Supper. All circumcised persons had right thereby to eat the Passeover in any societie, in the place which God should chuse to put his Name there. *Exod.* 12.4. 47. *Deut.* 16. 1, 2. So all baptised persons have true and intire right to the Lords Supper in everie true Church where God hath set his Name.

Thirdly, there is not the same reason of every Church priviledge, for one may have right to some, who is not to meddle with others. The members of one society may hear the Word, joyne in Prayer, and receive the Sacraments in another, when they are not to meddle in the election and ordination of their teachers. The Ministers of the Gospel may preach the Word, and administer the Sacraments in another congregation; and hereto he needs no other calling but that God offers an opportunitie; there is much need of his help, and he is intreated, or hath leave from them in place or office; but he is not to admit members into the societie, or cast them out that be admitted. And if the Pastor of one Church shall preach or administer the Sacraments in another, contrary to the liking and approbation of the Society and Governours, though the act be irregular, it was never esteemed a nullitie; but if he shall presume to excommunicate the members of another societie, without the consent of the Church, and approbation of Pastors and Teachers, under whose charge and jurisdiction they live, it hath been judged a meer nullity. Therefore the proposition is not so evident as to be taken without proofe, that they have no power to admit a beleever into communion in any Church priviledge who have no power to excommunicate.

Fourthly, that visible beleevers baptised into a true Church professing the true faith, and walking in holy obedience, and godly conversation, that they and their seed should be judged such as are without in the Apostles sense, because they be not externally joyned as set members to some particular congregation in Church Covenant; is affirmed, not proved.

1. Cor. 5. 12.

1. It

1. It hath, and may fall out many times through the ignorance, rashnesse, or pride of a prevailing faction in the Church, that the true members of the Catholique Church, and the best members of the orthodox visible flock, or congregation of Christ may be no members of any distinct visible societie. And shall their posteritie be esteemed Aliens and Strangers from the Covenant, and debarred from the Sacraments, because their parents are unjustly separated from the inheritance of the Lord? Surely as parents unjustly excommunicated do continue still not onely true members of the invisible body, but visible members of the flock of Christ: so the right of Baptisme doth belong to the Infants of such parents, though not actuall and constant members of this or that present assembly in Church order.

2. If they be without, because no members of a politike bodie or spirituall fellowship: then all members which are of one societie are without to another: For they that be not of the bodie are not capable of Church censures, or subject to the authoritie one of another. And so not being under the judgement of that particular Church to it they are without; whereas in ancient and moderne times distinct Societies did communicate together, admit and receive each other as brethren, to testifie their fellowship in the faith. If the reason whereupon the Apostle saith the Church of *Corinth* was not to judge them that were without, was because they were not within the Church of *Corinth*, and so not under their censure or judgement: this holds true of them that be of another society admitted to the Sacrament, as well as of such as be no set members desiring to be received to the Lords Supper.

3. (The fornicators of this world) do they not explaine whom the Apostle pointeth unto by the title of being without, *ver.* 10. 11. such as had not received the covenant of grace.

4. Church order is necessarie we denie not; but this order that a man should be a constant and set member of a particular societie by covenant, to make him a true member of the visible Church, or to give him title or interest to the publick order, this is not taught of God.

5. *Paul* divides all men into two ranks, the first and greater without; the last and lesser within: but that beleevers who have received the holy Ghost, and have been baptised into Jesus Christ, that they and their children should be reckoned among them that are without, that we read not in this nor any other Scripture, but in phrase of Scripture hereticks themselves are within the Church. 1. *Joh.* 2. 19. 1. *Cor.* 11. 19.

6. The beleevers not yet gathered (as the godly learned think) into a certain distinct body are called beleevers, brethren, disciples; but that they should be comprehended under them that are without, it hath not been beleeved in the Church.

7. Without (saith the Apostle whether alluding to this place or not, let others

Rev 22.15. ἔξω οἱ κυφνες. 1. Tim. 3.7. οἱ ἔξωθεν, & *Script. ethnici apud patres audiunt.* οἱ ἔξωθεν ὁ θυραθεν. Matth. 8.11. Ephes. 2.12. *Rob.* against *Ber. p.* 101.

judge) are dogs, inchanters, whoremongers, not such as are called faithfull and holy, walking in integritie, beleeving in and professing Jesus Christ to be their Saviour.

8. They that are without in the Apostes sense are Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but we hope you will not passe such rash and unadvised censure upon your brethren, who be not gathered into your societie as set members.

9. Let the interpretation stand, and he is without, not onely who is no set member of some congregationall Assembly, but he that is not subject to the censure of the community of that particular combination few or many, with, or without Officers. And so all the reformed Churches in the world who ascribe the power of the keyes to the Presbitry or Classes, and not to the community, and some amongst your selves (if not the most) shall be without also.

And therefore we cannot think approved Christians desiring to be received unto the Sacrament, either to be without, or uncapable of Church censures for the time being if they should offend, though not set members of any particular congregation: for desiring baptisme for their children or themselves to be admitted to the Lords Supper for the time they put themselves under the ordinance of Jesus Christ there. And as they are members for the time, so they might be proceeded against according to the rule prescribed by our Saviour, as they would proceed with an offending member.

10. If upon just and good reason a passage of Scripture can be cleared to prove that for which it was never alledged by any writer, we are not to except against any truth of God, because it wanteth mans testimonie. Onely if we desire credit in such cases, our reasons must be weightie and convincing. But for your exposition of this text of Scripture, as yet we have not observed one substantiall ground, or approved author to be alledged. Doctor *Ames* shewing the necessitie of Christians joyning themselves to some particular Church, giveth this reason, *Quoniam alias fieri non potest quum conturbentur signa illa quibus fideles ab infidelibus discerni possunt.* 1. *Cor.* 5.12. But herein Dr. *Ames* manifestly sheweth that by them that are [without] heathens, and unbeleevers must be understood, and not beleevers and godly men though of no particular setled societie for the time, for thus we conceive he argueth. The signes and evidences whereby the faithfull are to be discerned from unbeleevers, must not be confounded: but unlesse Christians make themselves actuall members of a Societie or Church, the signes whereby the faithfull are discerned from unbeleevers, will be obscured and darkned. And if this be his reason how can that text of Scripture be alledged for confirmation, unlesse by [men without] Infidels be understood. Again Doctor *Ames*

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in the same book, *lib.* 4. *ca.* 27. speaking of Infants to be received, it is required (he saith) that they be in the covenant of grace in respect of outward profession, and estimation in respect of their parents, and that there is hope they shall be instructed and brought up in the same covenant. 2. That Baptisme doth most properly belong to those infants whose parents, at least one of them is in the Church, and not without, because baptisme is a signe and seale of the covenant of grace. 3. That children that are cast forth are in charitie to be esteemed the children of Christian parents, when there is no just cause of presuming the contrary, that in admitting unto baptisme a difference must be put betweene the Infants of those who in some sort belong to the Church, but openly break the covenant of God, and the children of others.

1. Because a distinction must be observed in holy things betweene the cleane and uncleane; seeing else the ordinance of God cannot be preserved from all pollution. To say nothing of that which he addeth touching the baptisme of Infants borne in fornication, excommunication, and Papists, which is more then sufficient to cleare his meaning in the former passage. To this may be added that he holdeth it not necessarie that Christians should gather themselves into a particular society, but as opportunitie and occasion should offer it self. So that it was never his mind to censure them who be not gathered into Church-Covenant, because they want means or opportunitie as men *without* in the Apostles sense.

His judgement is further manifested in his second Manuduction, *pa.* 33. So many parish Assemblies of *England* (saith he) as have any competent number of good Christians in them, united to worship God ordinarily in one Societie, so many have the essence and integrall forme of a visible Church, and all they have intire right to Christ, and to all the meanes of injoying him, how ever they are defective in the puritie of their combination, and in the compleat free exercising of their power, whereupon a reverend * Elder now among you draws this conclusion, *Ergo* to dischurch them wholly, and to separate from them as no Churches of Christ, or to denie baptisme to the Infants of their known members is not warrantable by any rule of Scripture that I know, nor justified by any assertion or practise.

* Mr. *Io. D. Apol. Sect.* 40. *exam. p.* 182.

Answ. 5. *Consideration.*

WE may adde hereunto for a fifth Consideration, the evill and pernicious consequences of extending communion in Church priviledges beyond the bounds of Church fellowship: for thus, 1. The extraordinarie office of the Apostles, and the ordinarie office of Pastors and Teachers will be much confounded, if the latter be as illimited as the former in the execution of their office beyond the bounds of their own particular Churches. 2. The distinction of Church assemblies from the confused multitude is abrogated, if without

membership in a particular Church the parents may communicate with the Churches in the Lords Supper, and their seed in baptisme. 3. The Church shall indanger the profaning of the seals, and want one speciall meanes whereby the grace and pietie of men may be discerned and made known; for if without respect to their Church estate men of approved pietie (as you say) are to be admitted to fellowship in the seales, how shall their pietie be approved to the Church, not by their own report of themselves alone without attestation of such as are approved by the Church; and how can such beare witnesse to their approved pietie, who against light refuse to professe subjection to the Gospel of Christ by orderly joyning themselves in fellowship with some approved Church of Christ as members thereof when they have opportunitie thereunto, seeing such fellowship is an action of pietie required of all beleevers in the second Commandment; and true pietie frameth mens spirits to have respect to all Gods Commandments. And we have had much experience of it, that men of approved pietie in the judgement of some have been found too light, not onely in the judgement of others, but even of their own consciences, when they have come to triall in offering themselves to be members of Churches, with such a blessing hath God followed this order of taking hold of Church-Covenant by publick profession of faith and repentance before men be admitted to the seales; but this meanes of discoverie of mens pietie and finceritie would be utterly lost, if men should be admitted unto the Lords table without entring in Church-fellowship.

Reply.

IF it be repugnant to Divine Institution to admit of approved Christians lawfully baptized, walking in the faith, members of the visible Churches, and partakers of Church priviledges among us to the Lords Supper, or their children to baptisme, becaus they be not entred into Church fellowship according to your order, then it is unlawfull though no such evill consequences are to be feared.

What though this inconvenience do arise sometimes through mans corruption it should be otherwise; and we must ever consider of the nature of Gods ordinances in their right use, &c. *Rob.* against *Ber. pa.* 213.

But if by accident some abuse should fall out, the evill is to be prevented by all lawfull meanes: but the faithfull are not utterly to be debarred of the order of God, whereto they have right and title by his free grant and gracious invitation. And no question but the seales of the Covenant may be profaned many times when it is not in the power of the dispensers to put back or expell such as profane them. If the Congregation shall admit of, or tolerate an unworthy member, the Churches priviledges are profaned; and yet we conceive

Respondit causam nullam fuisse cur Io. Bapt. istos accedentes rejiceret ut qui ad ejus bapt. venirent cum peccatorum agnitione nec ipse potestatem haberet eos excommunicandi etiamsi fuissent excom. digni. Beza de Presb. p 23.

conceive you will say the Pastor is not faulty in receiving him, when the Church doth tolerate unworthily, if he do what pertaineth to his office to keep the holy things of God from contempt. But in the case propounded there is no feare or danger of such consequences necessarie to follow: for the question is not of all sorts at randame, but of Christians professing the faith intirely, lawfully baptised, known, and approved to the consciences of the wise and judicious visible members of the Churches of Christ among us often admitted to the Lords Table, whether these either sufficiently knowne unto you, or orderly recommended may upon desire and suite themselves be admitted to communicate in the Lords Supper, and their children to be baptized, what feare is there now that the extraordinarie office of the Apostles, and the ordinarie office of Pastors and Teachers shall be much or little confounded? Is this to take as illimited power as the Apostles did in the execution of their office? How shal this tend to abrogate the distinction of Church Assemblies from the confused multitude? or how is the profanation of the seals thereby indangered?

Recte sane quis illos à sacris prohibuerat, &c. etsi sit tam sceleratus quispiam quam esse existimatur tum si tale judicium sibi quisque sumat quæ mox fuerit Ecclesiæ facies? sed præterea tenendum est illud in hoc negotio, &c.

You aske if without respect to their Church estate men of approved pietie (as we say) are to be admitted into fellowship in the seals, how shall their pietie be approved to the Church, not by their own report of themselves alone, &c. Do not you say the same, That there be many godly persons, and of approved pietie among us, who are not approved by their own report of themselves (unlesse ye will take their wisedome, faith, patience, courage, constancie, and holinesse of life for their report) approved, we say by as ample and sufficient testimonie as the Apostles exacted of them whom they received into Church fellowship, or can be required of members admitted unto the priviledges of the Church, if men will follow the Lords direction, or as you can give to ordinary members of your societies. You professe high respect of your brethren in old *England*, but it seemes you judge them insufficient to give orderly testimonie of the sinceritie and uprightnesse of approved Christians, well known unto them, and living among them, which two cannot well agree. We speake not of such who against light refuse to professe subjection to the Gospel of Christ to joyne themselves orderly in fellowship with some approved Church: But of such as do with all readinesse professe subjection, and walk accordingly, and heartily desire to joyn themselves to the most pure and compleat Churches so farre as they are taught of God, or have opportunitie thereunto. And if exception be taken against them onely, who refuse against light to submit themselves to the Gospel; by what rule do you proceed when you judge men to refuse against light, or debarre them who do not refuse against conscience, but for

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lacke of opportunitie. No doubt (as you say) but now and then a man of approved pietie in the judgement of some may be found too light, yea and in the judgement of his owne conscience when he hath come to triall. And no question but many have been admitted by the Church, who indeed and truth are much too light; and some refused who deserved better then they that cast them off, we will not dispute what errours have been committed, nor what blessing ye have found upon your proceedings; we heartily beseech the Lord to keep your congregation pure, make his ordinances more and more effectuall, go before you in the way wherein you should walk, and multiply his mercies upon you in the same. But this we are perswaded, and therefore we speak, that in debarring godly Christians from the Lords Supper, and much more the children of those parents who are in covenant with God, from holy baptisme you exceed your commission you have received from God, and go beyond your due bounds. And notwithstanding your circumspection more worthy and faithfull Christians have been denied when of lesse worth, and meaner sufficiencies have passed, and been by you received.

Answ. 6. Consid.

NOne have power to dispence the Seales but they that are called to the office of Ministery; and no man can be so called till first there be a Church to call him, seeing the power of calling Ministers is given by Christ unto the Church; and thence it follows, that all those that desire to partake of the Seales, are bound to joyne themselves in Church state, that so they may call a Minister to dispense the Seales unto them. And this dutie by the appointment of God lieth not onely upon some Christians, but equally upon all: *ergo* no Christian can expect by the appointment of God to partake in the Seals till he have joyned himselfe in Church fellowship, and in the call of the Minister. And indeed seeing a Church, and a Minister called by the Church, is of such necessitie for the dispensing of the seales, it may seeme unreasonable that some Christians should be bound to become a Church, and to call a Minister that so the seales may be dispensed, and other men (when this is done) have equall libertie to the seals who refuse to joyne unto the Church.

Demonstr. of Disc. ca. 4.

Reply.

THis conclusion is not to the question propounded, for we speake of such as cannot, not of such as refuse to joyne themselves unto the Church; or if they do not joyne, it is not out of contempt or wilfull neglect of Gods ordinance, or desire of carnall libertie, and not to be in subjection to Christ, but for lacke of opportunitie, or through their fault that should admit them but do not. For if in any of your Churches you shall require more of members to be admitted then Christ the chiefe Shepherd of the flock doth, or presse that upon their consci-

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ences which they cannot consent unto, if they shall sit downe quietly for the time and serve God in private, when they cannot injoy Church priviledges, it is your fault and not theirs. And they may more justly challenge the Assemblie as injurious and tyrannicall, then you them as wilfull despisers of Gods ordinance. We accuse not the wisedome and discretion of your Chuches, but we know the zealous multitude may sometimes be rash; And when a reason is craved of your judgement, why you do debarre the most knowne and approved Christians which come over, and their children from the seals of the covenant, we dislike you should put this note upon them, as if against light they refused orderly to subject themselves to the Gospel of Jesus Christ: What warrant you have thus to censure, what use of this manner of dispute we leave it to your godly wisedome to judge. In the Consideration it self there are many Propositions couched together, which we must examine severally as they have reference to the conclusion intended, and then try whether it can be raised from them.

The first Proposition, That none have power to dispence the Seales, but they that are called to the office of Ministery, is freely granted.

The second, That no man can be so called till first there be a Church to call him, needeth explication. For by the Church you must understand the community of the faithfull, as they are one bodie, without officers or guides. And such a Church there cannot be without a Ministery to call and admit them into Church-fellowship. The Apostles baptised not themselves, but by the help of others, & those not called of the people to be baptised, 1 *Cor.* 1.17. The Apostles appointed by electiõ, Elders in every city or Church. And so there was a Church before Elders were set over it, but this Church was a societie of beleevers by baptisme admitted into Church-fellowship. There can be no Church to call a Minister to feed the flock, and dispence the seals, till they have received the doctrine of salvation intirely, and by the seale of initiation be solemnly received into the societie of men professing Christ. A company of men converted to the faith being unbaptized, may and ought to desire baptisme, but they have not power to elect and chuse one among themselves to dispence the seales unto the rest for ought is to be found in Scripture: The Churches constitution into which Christians are to gather themselves must be Apostolicall, and not one day or houre younger in nature and forme of it, thus the first Church of the New Testament. But it can never be shewed in Scripture that any societie of unbaptised persons did first chuse from among them a Pastor or Teacher by whom they might be baptised: you cannot produce one example or other proofe in the Scripture, of one man teaching the Gospel ministerially but he was baptised, and a member of a true Church, or of a societie who made choice of a Pastor and teacher, but they were baptised persons. *Rob.* against *Bern.* likely veiwed. *p.* 40.

The third Proposition, That the power of calling Ministers is given by Christ unto the Church, must also be rightly understood: For by the Church must be

meant the societie of the faithfull, not onely ingrafted into Christ, set into the state of salvation, and made heires apparent of everlasting blessednesse, but solemnly entred and inrolled into the societie of Christs flock, and acknowledged members by free admission into the Seales of the Covenant. Againe, by the Church if we speake of ordinary calling, must not be understood of the faithfull alone, but their guides and officers together with them, who are to goe before the rest, and to direct and governe them in their choice. Neither can we say, that any two or three beleevers linked together in societie doe make such a Church, as to whom the calling of the Minister doth belong: but that right was given by Christ to such Churches as were gathered and established by the Apostles. The Church hath a Ministery of calling one whom Christ hath described, that from Christ he may have power of Office given him in the vacant place. But the office, gift, and power of the Ministery, is immediately from Christ and not from the Church. The Church doth neither virtually nor formally give power to her Officers but ministerially onely, as ministring to him who hath power and vertue to conferre it. And this right of election is so given to the communitie and body of the people, that if they have consented to give away their right, or if it be taken injuriously from them, the calling of the Minister notwithstanding may be true, and ministeriall acts done by him that is thrust upon the people without their consent may be effectuall to their salvation. A wrong it is altogether to debarre the godly of their consent in the calling of such as must watch for their soules; but it makes not the calling it selfe a meere nullitie; for then many Churches in the world within a few hundred yeares after Christ should have wanted both ministery and Sacraments, and they would have been altogether destitute of both ministery and Sacraments for many hundred yeares.

The fourth, That all those who desire to partake in the Seales, are bound to joyne themselves together in Church-state, that so they may call a Minister to dispence the Seales unto them, will not follow from the former rightly understood. We deny not but Christians are bound to joyne themselves together in holy fellowship, if God give them opportunitie: but they must partake in the Seales before they can joyne themselves together in Church-state. And such as for lack of meanes and opportunitie cannot joyne themselves into such an estate, or be dispersed by persecution, or be destitute of Pastors and Teachers, may for a time desire and seek to have the seales dispenced unto them by the Pastors and Teachers of other Societies, with whom they hold communion in the faith. The people also who are deprived of right and libertie to choose their Pastor, may desire and seek to have the Seales dispenced unto them by him who is set over them. If a company of Infidells should be converted to the faith, they must desire to partake in the ordinances of grace before they could joyne together in a Church-way to call a Minister of their own, who might administer the Sacraments unto them.

them. To make Disciples and baptize are joyned together. And if these Propositions be allowed for current, a nation or people plunged into Idolatry or Infidelitie, or otherwise dischurched, cannot by ordinary meanes recover into a Church-estate, wherein they may lawfully and according to Gods appointment desire or expect that the Seales of the Covenant should be dispenced to them. John 4. 2. Math. 28. 19.

The fifth Proposition riseth beyond measure, that no Christian can expect by the appointment of God to partake in the Seales till he have joyned himselfe in Church-fellowship and the calling of the Minister. Wee conceive you will not say that children and women have to doe in the call of the Minister (for women they are debarred by their sex as from ordinary Propheſying, so from any other dealing wherein they take authority over the man) If some part of the Congregation doe not consent in the election of Pastors or Teachers, have they not right to expect to have the Seales of the Covenant dispenced to themselves or their seede? If the people be deprived of that libertie to choose or call their Minister, must they seperate from the ordinances of worship there dispenced, and from the Congregations as no true Churches? If some persons by the providence of God live in such places where they cannot joyne in Church-fellowship and call of the Minister (as suppose the Christian wife, childe, or servant) nor lawfully remove to any such Societie, must they and their children live as strangers and aliens from the Covenant of grace, wherein they may not expect to partake of the Seales? If Infidels be converted to the faith, must they not partake in the Seales, because they cannot joyne in Church-fellowship and call of the Minister, before they be admitted to Baptisme? 1 Cor. 14. 34, 35. Tit. 2. 11, 12. *Rob. ag. Ber. pa.* 206,

Here you say the people must joyne together in the call of the Minister, before they can lawfully desire to be admitted to the Seales. And another hath zealously affirmed (It is a presumptuous sin in any to choose an Officer not trained up and tryed (*scil.*) in the debating, discussing, carrying, and contriving of Church-affaires, as also in admonition, exhortation, and comfort, publickly occasioned and so manifested) Lay these two together, and let it be considered how long many a poore soule converted to the faith must be compelled to want the comfort of Gods ordinances. Besides, if a people be joyned together in Church-fellowship, and have called a Pastor to feed and watch over them, wee desire (not words but) proofe why the poore dispersed Christians wanting means or opportunitie to joyn themselves together into societie, ought not to desire, and that others be not bound in conscience to afford them the comfort of Gods ordinances. *Rob. ag. Bern. pa.* 239.

If the Propositions may stand for good, I feare we shall scarce finde that ever in ordinary way, the Sacraments were lawfully dispenced or received in the Christian Churches of God since the first foundation of them. Now the premises

being liable to so many exceptions, the conclusion to be laid upon them, will fall of it selfe. And thereunto wee oppose the direct contrary. That Infidels converted to the faith, or godly Christians, formerly visible beleevers, knowne and approved members of Congregations professing the intire faith, and joyning together in the lawfull use of the Sacraments for substance according to the Institution, may and ought to desire and expect the Seales of the Covenant to be dispenced to them, and to their seede, though for the present they be not joyned into such Church-state and call of Ministers as you require.

Answer 7. Consideration.

THat our practise may not be censured as novell and singular, give us leave to produce a President of the like care observed and approved by publick countenance of State in the dayes of *Edward 6.* of blessed and famous memory, who in the yeare 1550. granted *Johannes Alasco* a learned Noble man of *Poland* under the great Seale of *England*, libertie to gather a Church of strangers in *London*, and to order themselves according as they should finde to be most agreeable to the Scriptures. Among other godly orders established in that Church, that which concerned the Administration of Baptisme to prevent the prophanation of it we will repeate in *Alascoes* owne words. *Baptisme in our Church* (saith he) *is administred in the publique Assembly of the Church after the publique Sermon: for seeing Baptisme doth so belong to the Whole Church that none ought to be driven thence, which is a member of the Church, nor to be admitted to it who is not a member of it, truely it is equall that that should be performed publiquely in the Assembly of the whole Church, which belongs to the whole Church in common.* Againe, he addeth; *Now seeing our Churches are by Gods blessing so established by the Kings Majestie, that they may be as it were one parish of strangers dispersed throughout the whole Citie, or one body corporate* (as it is called in the Kings grant) *and yet all strangers doe not joyne themselves to our Church, yea there are those who while they avoyde all Churches, will pretend to the English Churches that they are joyned with us, and to us that they are joyned to the English Churches, and so doe abuse both them and us, lest the English Churches and the Ministers thereof should be deceived by the impostures of such men* (*and that under colour of our Churches*) *wee doe baptize their Infants alone who have adjoyned themselves to our Churches by publique confession of their faith, and observation of Ecclesiasticall discipline. And that our Churches may be certaine that the Infants that are to be baptized are their seede, who have joyned themselves thereto in manner aforesaid, the father of the Infant to be baptized* (*if possible he can*) *or other men and women of notable credit in the Church, doe offer the Infant to Baptisme, and doe publickly professe that it is the seede of the Church, yet wee suffer no stranger to offer Infants to Baptisme in our Churches, who hath not made publique profession of his faith, and willingly submitted himselfe to the Discipline of the Church, lest otherwise they who present their children to Baptisme, might in time plead that they*

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belong to our Churches, and so should deceive the English Churches and their Ministers. To those which presented Infants to Baptisme, they propounded three questions, the first was; *Are these Infants which yee offer the seed of this Church, that they may lawfully be here baptized by our Ministery? &c.* Answer, *Yea.* This Instance is the more to be regarded, because *Alasco* affirmeth in the preface of that Book, that this libertie was by the King granted to them out of his desire to settle alike reformation in the *English Churches,* which in effect you see the same with our practise in this particular.

Reply.

THe practise of the Church of strangers in *London,* recorded by *John Alasco,* is farre different from your judgement and practise, not in some by-circumstances, but in the maine point in question; for your judgement is that true visible beleevers, baptized and partakers of the Lords Supper in other Churches not yet gathered into Church-estate or fellowship, have no right or interest in the Seales, (they nor their seede) But this Church of strangers held no such opinion as their own words (which you have omitted) doe plainly speake. And *Paul* testifyeth (say they) that by Christs Ordinance the Church it selfe without exception of any member of it, is to be accounted cleane or holy by the ministery of Baptisme. Whence we may easily see, that Baptisme doth neither belong to those who are altogether without the Church, nor to be denyed to any member of the Church. Secondly, They held communion with the Church of *England* as one and the same with theirs. For so they professe: Yet nevertheless, that we may openly shew that the *English* Churches and ours are one and the same Church (though we differ somewhat from them both in language and Ceremonies) We doe not refuse that the *English* may as publick witnesses of the Church offer the Infants of our members to Baptisme in our Churches, if they have both the use of our language and a certain testimony of their piety. As in like manner our members are accustomed to offer the Infants of the *English* to Baptisme in the *English Churches.* If your judgement be this of the *English Churches,* your judgement in acknowledging us members of true Churches, and practise in debarring visible beleevers and their seede from the Seales, are opposite the one to the other. Thirdly, This order was observed by them to prevent the impostures of some, who whilst they avoyded all Churches, pretended to the *English,* that they were joyned to the strangers, and to the strangers that they were joyned to the *English.* But you debarre knowne Christians who desire to joyne themselves with you, not to prevent impostures of them who avoyde all Churches: yea, you debarre them as men having no right to the Sacraments, because they be not in Church-fellowship: and herein you can shew no president ancient or moderne, either from Scripture or Monuments of the Church: And as your practise is without example, so without warrant from the word of God. And this is the

maine reason why we cannot consent unto you in this particular which we thus propound.

1 *Reason.*

THat sacred order which God hath set in his visible Church for all his Saints to keep and walk by, that is religiously to be observed. But for men to set up that as a necessarie order which God never allowed, approved, or commanded, is great presumption. Now the Lord hath not ordained that a man should be a set member of a particular Societie, or body politique of faithfull people joyned together in spirituall Church-fellowship by Covenant, before he be admitted unto the Lords Supper, or that the parents should be actuall visible set members of some particular distinct body before their children be baptised. They that beleeve in Jesus Christ have received the word of promise and walk therein, they and their children are within the Covenant, and have right and title to the Seales of the Covenant, but in their order, the infants to baptisme, parents baptised, to the Lords Supper. And if in that state by divine grant they have interest to the Sacraments, the Church in debarring them because they be not yet grown into one distinct separate societie of mutuall covenant, doth exceed the bounds of her commission. For a ministeriall power onely is committed to the Church to admit or refuse them who are to be admitted or refused by authoritie from God: But the Church if she thrust beleeving parents from the Supper of the Lord, and their seed from baptisme; she denieth these benefits to them who by the grace and gift of God have lawfull right and title thereto.

1. For first, the baptisme of *John* was true baptisme, and truly administred by him: And they that were baptized by him received the seales of the Covenant, and were esteemed members of the visible Church: But *John* never demanded of them who came to his baptisme whether they were entred into spirituall fellowship by mutuall covenant one with another. This was not then knowne to be a necessarie and essentiall point in the lawfull, due, and orderly administration of the Sacrament. The disciples of our Saviour made and baptised disciples professing the faith, but not combined into Church-state or fellowship. The Apostles commission was first to teach the Gentiles, and then to baptise them having received their doctrine. And this they carefully observed in the execution of their ministery upon grounds and reasons common to them and us: for as soone as any man or number of men gladly received the doctrine of salvation, and gave their names to Jesus Christ, if they desired to be baptised forthwith they accepted them, never excepting, that they were no set members of a distinct visible congregation. When the first 3000. converts, being pricked in their consciences, came to *Peter*, and the rest of the Apostles, saying, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* *Peter* returns this answer, *Repent and be baptised*

Matth. 3. 6, 7.

Ioh. 4. 2. and 3. 22.

Matt. 28. 19. 20.

Act. 2. 37, 38.

every

every one of you in the Name of Jesus, &c. For to you is the promise made, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, &c. As soon as the Samaritanes beleeved, *Philip Who preached the things that concerned the kingdom of God, they were baptised both men and women.* When the Eunuch asked of *Philip, See here is water, What doth let me to be baptised?* he answereth not if thou beest first received as a set member into a visible congregation *thou mayest: but if thou beleevest with all thy heart, thou mayest. Can any man forbid water* (saith *Peter*, speaking of the Gentiles upon whom was powred the gift of the holy Ghost) *that these should not be baptised who have received the gift of the holy Ghost as well as We?* At that time it was not held a bar sufficient to keep them from the Sacrament of baptisme, because they were not set members of a distinct societie, which had it been essentiall to the lawfull and orderly administration of the Sacraments, questionlesse it had been observed in the first Institution and administration of them. *Annanias* baptised *Paul* before he was any set member of a congregationall Assembly. *Lydia* and her houshold, the Jaylor and his house were baptised without regard to their Church estate. For in the same night which he was converted, he was baptized with all his houshold. And this was done not by the Apostles onely upon speciall dispensation, but by others upon grounds and reasons common to them, and all ages, *viz.* because they were disciples, beleeved, gladly received the Word, had received the holy Ghost, were called, and the promise was made to them, and to their seed, even to all them that were afarre off.

Act. 8. 12. *Act.* 8. 47. & 11. 16. 17. Act. 8. 37. Act. 10. 47. and 11. 16. 17. Act. 9. 18. Act. 16. 14. 33. 1. Cor. 1. 17. Matth. 28. 19. Act. 2. 41. and 8. 12. 13. 37. *Helv. conf. c.* 20. *Gallic. Sect.* 35. *Anglic. & ab eo neminem qui velit profiteri nomen Christi ne infantes quidem Christianorum hominum, &c. Scot. conf. c.* 23.

Now if the Apostles dispensed the seales to them that were not in Church-fellowship upon common grounds, it is not essentiall to the lawfull dispensation of the seales, that all partakers should be under such a covenant. If the baptised disciples, beleevers, such as gladly received the Word, and had received the gift of the holy Ghost, then the seals of the Covenant belong unto such, and by the grace of God they have right and title unto those priviledges.

Belgic. act 34 *Zengerm. conf. de Bapt. infant. pro.* 44. *Argent. conf. ca.* 17. *Saxon. confes. ca.* 14. *Palab. conf. Sect. ad usum vero ipsum, &c.*

2. As we received the Sacraments from God by divine Institution; so must we learne from him, how and to whom the same are to be administred, observing what he hath commanded without addition or diminution. But we have learned from Christ the Author of Baptisme, and the constant practise of the Apostles (the first dispensers of these holy seales who best understood the mind and pleasure of the Lord herein) that such as be called of God to whom the promise is made, who have received the gifts of the holy Ghost, beleeved in the

Lord Jesus, professed their faith in him, and repentance for sins past with purpose of amendment for the time to come, that such have right unto, and desiring it ought to be received unto Baptisme, and are greatly wronged if they be deprived of that unspeakable benefit.

3. By a lively faith a man is made a living member of Jesus Christ, and hath internall communion with him by the intire profession of Christian faith joyned with conformity of life in righteousnesse, and holinesse, and fellowship of love, he is a member of the visible congregation or flock of Christ, though no set member of a free distinct independant Societie. And Baptisme is the seale of our admission into the congregation or flock of Christ; but not evermore of our receiving into this or that particular societie as set members thereof. This latter is accidentall to baptisme, not essentiall. It may fall out to be so, but it is not ever necessarie; nor is the Sacrament to be denyed, nor can we say it is imperfectly administred where it cannot be attained. For the Catholique Church is one intire bodie, made up by the collection and agregation of all the faithfull unto the unity thereof; from which union there ariseth unto every one of them such a relation to, dependance upon that Church Catholique as parts use to have in respect of the whole. And this holds true, not onely of sound beleevers in respect of internall fellowship with Christ their head, and so one with another; but of all men professing the true and intire doctrine of faith and salvation in respect of them that hold and professe the same faith of Christ, and worship God according to his will; whereupon it followeth that neither particular persons, nor particular guides, nor particular Churches are to worke as severall divided bodies by themselves, but are to teach, and be taught; and to do all other duties as parts conjoyned to the whole, and members of the same flock or societie in generall: And so beleevers professing the faith, and walking in holinesse, may and ought to be admitted to the Seales as actuall members of the Church of Christ, and sheep of his pasture, though not set members of one congregationall Church.

4. Not to insist upon this here, that it hath and may fall out many times through ignorance, rashnesse, or pride, of a prevailing faction in the Church, that the true members of the Catholique Church, and the best members of the Orthodox visible flock, or Church of Christ, may be no actuall members of any distinct Societie, and shall they for this be accounted men out of Covenant, and their posteritie be esteemed aliens and strangers: but if they be in Covenant, then are they holy in respect of the Covenant, and their children holy as pertaining to the Covenant, and have right to the Sacrament of initiation. Thus Mr. *Rob.* frameth the argument. The Sacrament of Baptisme is to be administred by Christs appointment, and the Apostles example onely to such as are (externally, and so far as men can judge) taught and made disciples, do receive the Word gladly, do beleeve, and so professe, have received the holy Ghost, and

Rob. against *Ber. pa.* 92. Matth. 28, 19. Act. 2. 41. & 8. 12 13 37. and 10. 47.

to their seed. And thus the Church of God ever since the Apostles dayes understood the covenant and promise, and their practise in receiving beleevers and their seed to the Seales of the Covenant was answerable, as might be shewed at large, if it was not a thing confessed. Hereunto you answer. 1 Cor. 7. 19.

Answer.

WHere the holy Ghost is given and received (which was the case of the Centurion) and where faith is professed according to Gods ordinance (which was the case of the rest) there none may hinder them from being baptised, *viz.* by such as have power to baptise them. In the Instances given baptisme was administred either by Apostles or Evangelists, not ordinary Pastors: the persons baptised, if they were members of Churches, had a right to baptisme in their state, and the Apostles being Officers of all Churches might dispense the seales to them where ever they came, which yet will not warrant ordinary Officers to do the same. Nor is it improbable but that all these were in Church-order, *Aret.* on *Act.* 18. 1. is of opinion, that the Centurion had a constituted Church in his house; the Eunuches coming to Jerusalem to worship, Act. 8. 27. argueth him to be a Proselyte, and member of the Jewish Church not yet dissolved: and therefore upon the profession of the Christian faith capable of Church priviledges at that time. As for *Lydia* and the Gaylor it appeareth that in the beginning of the Gospel there was a Church at *Philippi* which communicated with *Paul* as concerning giving and receiving: As he expresly saith, before his departure was from *Macedonia*, which departure was immediately upon the Gaylors conversion. In which respect what should hinder that *Lydia* and the Gaylor should first be joyned to the Church, and then to be baptised though it be not mentioned in that story? As neither there is mention of a Christian Church, which *Paul* mentioneth in his Epistle to the *Philippians*. At least it is probable that *Lydia* was a member of the Jewish Church, because she is said to be one that worshipped God. But if any man think they were not members of any Church yet baptised, though we see not how it will be proved, yet if it were so, the object doth no whit weaken the argument, which speaketh of the ordinary dispensation of the seales, and not of what was done in an extraordinary way. So that suppose that in the cases alledged, baptisme dispensed to some that were not in Church-fellowship, yet the examples of the Apostles and Evangelists in so doing will not warrant ordinary Pastors to do the like. The reason of the difference why Apostles and Evangelists might administer Baptisme out of Church-order, whereas Pastors and Teachers may not, is double. 1. Because their calling gave them illimited power over all men, especially Christians whersoever they came. But we do not find that ordinarie Pastors and Teachers can do an act of power, but onely over their own Church, which hath called them to watch over them in the Lord. 2. Because they were Act. 4. 15.

assisted with an immediate direction and guidance of the holy Ghost, in the places of their administration in the cases alledged. But ordinary Church-Officers are to walke according to ordinary rules of the Scripture in the dispensation of the Seales, and not to expect immediate inspirations and extraordinary revelations for their helpe in such cases. This difference between Apostles and ordinary Church-Officers must needs be acknowledged, or otherwise a man might from their example justifie Baptisme in private houses.

Reply.

THis Answer stands of many parts, wherein things doubtfull are affirmed, and that which more weakeneth the force of the consideration before alledged, and the Answer it selfe, then of the reason whereunto it is applyed. For

First, If where the holy Ghost is given and received, and where faith is professed according to Gods ordinance, there none may hinder them from being baptized, *viz.* by such as have power to baptize them: Then either men that have received the holy Ghost, and professe the faith, be members of the Church, or Baptisme is not a priviledge of the Church, then it is not essentiall to the first Institution of Baptisme, that it should be dispenced to none but such as were entered into Church-fellowship, or were set members of a congregationall Assembly. Then the Apostles in dispensing the Seales unto such, or commanding them to be dispenced, did walk according to the rules of Scripture, and upon grounds common to them and us, *viz.* they admitted them unto the Sacraments who had right and interest to them, according to the minde and pleasure of the Institutor, not extraordinarily revealed, besides the common rules, or by speciall dispensation and prerogative excepted from the common rule, but made knowne in the Institution it selfe. And then the difficultie remaining is onely this, whether a Pastor or Teacher hath authority from Christ to dispence the Seales of the Covenant to one who hath right and title to them, and doth orderly desire that benefit because he is not as yet received as a set member of that particular societie which your practise in admitting of set members of other Congregations unto the Seales doth manifestly convince. For if both have equall interest unto the Seales, the Pastor upon lawfull suite and request hath equall authoritie to receive the one as well as the other.

Secondly, In the particular Instances given, it is not probable that Baptisme was evermore administred by Apostles or Evangelists; For before the death of Christ, the Disciples baptized when they were properly neither Apostles nor Evangelists: After the death of Christ (not to insist upon conjectures whether any assisted the Apostles in the baptizing of the first three thousand converted) it is not certaine, whether *Peter* baptized *Cornelius* and his family, or commanded others then present with him

Joh 4. 2, 3. & 3. 27.

Act. 10. 48.

him to baptize them: the words may be read: *Et jussit eos baptizari in nomine Domini. Syr. & Arab. Præcepit eis ut baptizarentur.* The Interlineary glosse leaveth it doubtfull, *Associis suis vel a seipso.* Others are of opinion that *Peter* did baptize them himselfe. It cannot be proved that *Philip* and *Ananias* were both Evangelists, when the one baptized the *Samaritans* and the *Eunuch*, the other *Paul*. *Paul* himselfe baptized but a few as he testifieth of himselfe, and reason to convince that others converted by his preaching were baptized by Evangelists, we know not any. And if *Philip*, *Ananias*, and others might baptize such as had right and title to the Seales, being as yet no set members of any particular Congregation: and a Congregation destitute of their proper Pastor, may desire another to baptize their Infants, and dispence the Sacrament of the Supper to them in that their necessitie. And if the members of one Congregation may lawfully communicate in another, then may the Pastors of particular Congregations upon occasion admit to the Seales of the Covenant such known and approved Christians, as have right and title thereunto, and duely and orderly require the same; for of all these the reason is like and perpetuall.

Whit. de Sacra. q. 3. de Bap. cap. 2. pa 260.
Act. 8. 12. & 9. 18. 1 Cor. 1. 17.

Thirdly, It is very improbable that the persons baptized, were in Church-state or order. If they were members of the Jewish Church not yet dissolved, this is not to the purpose; for men have not right to Baptisme, because they were members of the Jewish Church, but because Disciples and (as you say) joyned together in Covenant, and have fellowship and calling of their Minister, who is to dispence the Seales unto them. And Baptisme is the Sacrament of initiation, not into the Jewish but the Christian Churches. Secondly, when you say, *the Seales in ordinary dispensation are the priviledges of the Churches. There are no Ministers but of particular Churches. Baptisme and the Lords Supper are to be administred onely to the members of the Church. No societie may lawfully desire the Seales, unlesse they have joyned in the choice and calling of their Minister. Beleevers not yet joyned in Church-order are without.* Doe yee not in all these understand a Christian societie, united in a Church-way, &c. which cannot agree to the members of the Jewish Church, not yet dissolved. Thirdly, The constitution of the Church (saith Mr. *Robin.*) is the orderly collection and conjunction of the Saints into and in the Covenant of the New Testament; but the members of Jewish Churches not yet dissolved, were not in such constitution. If the Eunuch and Centurion were proselytes and members of the Church of the Jewes; The Samaritanes whom *Philip* baptized were not so. And that any Gentiles, or the Gailor whom *Paul* baptized in the Apostles times, were set members of a Christian Assembly before baptized, is very strange. If there was a Church at *Philippi*, yet the Gailor who was baptized and converted the same night, could not be a set member by solemne admission before Baptisme. It is said the Apostles baptized these persons in an extraordinary way. But in this practise of

Against *Bpa.* 88.

the Apostles two things are to be considered. 1. The circumstance of the action. 2. The qualitie or substance of the act. In some circumstances the baptizing of some of these persons might be extraordinary, but the substance and qualitie of the action was grounded upon rules perpetuall and common to us with them.

1. That is done in an extraordinary way, which by peculiar priviledge of dispensation is made lawfull to some one or few men, which is unlawfull to all others, not having the same dispensation, but where the ground and reason of the action is common: we must not conceive the thing to be done in an extraordinary way by speciall dispensation. What was done by the Apostles upon speciall revelation and immediate direction, besides the ordinary and common rule, in that wee are not to immitate or follow them, because we have not their warrant. But what they did upon reasons and grounds reaching unto us no lesse then unto them, in that we have the same libertie, allowance, or commandement that they did walk by. In one and the same action there may be and oft is something ordinary, something extraordinary or peculiar to speciall times or persons. So it was in the Apostles administration of the Seales: but in every place where they came by illimited power (as you speake) they did baptize Disciples, if they did baptize; this was proper to them, and could not be communicated to any others by them; For there is no passage of Scripture which teacheth this, that one Officer may communicate his power to another, or doe that which particularly belongeth to his office by a Deputie: But that they baptized beleevers professing their faith in the Lord Jesus, and repentance towards God, such as had gladly imbraced the Word, and received the gifts of the holy Ghost: this was common to them with all Pastors and Teachers, because they did it, not by power illimited or speciall dispensation, but upon this standing perpetuall reason, that *the promise was made to them and to their seede, and to as many as the Lord shall call, that they had received the holy Ghost, and the kingdome of heaven belonged to them.* And if the grounds and reasons of their practise be common reaching to us, no lesse then unto them, the practise it selfe was not extraordinary. To say nothing that this Answer will not stand with the former; for if the parties baptized were set members of particular Societies, the Apostles did not baptize them in an extraordinary way, they did it by the guidance and direction of the Spirit, that is true, but not by guidance of dispensation, or prerogative, whereby that was made lawfull without such inspiration had been unlawfull. But they were infallibly guided to doe that which was according to the word of God, and might stand for our direction: that in case it be orderly desired a Pastor hath authoritie in his owne Congregation, to receive knowne and approved Christians to the seales of the Covenant, hath been proved before. If the Apostles dispenced the seales onely to the Church, Disciples, faithfull, who received the doctrine of salvation with gladnesse of heart, and were partakers of the holy Ghost, then they dispenced the seales in an ordinary way, for such have title and interest to the

seales

seales by the Institution and appointment of God. And every Pastor by his Office may and ought to dispence the seales unto such, within the bounds and limits of his calling: But the Apostles dispenced the seales onely to the Church, Disciples, faithfull, &c.

2. An Argument followeth necessarily from particular example to a generall; when one particular is proved by another particular, by force of the similitude common to the whole kinde, under which those particulars are contained; But the practise of the Apostles in baptizing Disciples and faithfull, by force of similitude common to the whole kinde, agreeth with the practise of Ministers receiving to Baptisme the seed of the faithfull, though as yet not set members of any particular societie, In some circumstances there may be difference when yet the reason is strong, if the difference be not in the very likenesse it selfe whereupon the reason is grounded. One circumstance that is materiall to the point may overthrow the likenesse pretended, and twenty different circumstances, if they be not to the point in hand make no dissimilitude. Now in this matter wee speake of, no circumstance is or can be named why we should thinke it lawfull for the Apostles to baptize Disciples as yet being no set members of particular societies, and the same should be unlawfull in all cases for ordinary Pastors in their particular Congregations, though it be desired.

3. What is done by extraordinary dispensation, that is lawfull for them onely who have received such dispensation, and by them cannot be communicated to others. But the Apostles baptized by others seldome by themselves, as hath been shewed.

4. We might urge the rule which a reverend Elder among you, giveth in another matter, *(scil.)* Those examples which are backed with some divine precept, or which are held forth in the first Institution of an ordinance, being part of the institution, or which were the constant lawfull actions of holy men in Scripture, not civill but sacred so binde us to imitation, as that not to conforme thereunto is sinne. For the Assumption to this Proposition, it is plaine and naturall: But the practise of the Apostles in receiving the faithfull, Disciples, &c. is backed with divine precept, held forth in the first Institution, and was their constant lawfull practise, agreeable to the practise of all others who were imployed in that service; *Ergo*, &c.

See *J. D. Ap. Sect. 12. pa.* 152,153,154.

5. In the first consideration, you prove the Seales to be the priviledge of the Church in ordinary dispensation, by this passage of Scripture, *Then they that gladly received the Word were baptized:* but if Apostles baptize by extraordinary dispensation in your sense this testimony is insufficient for that purpose.

2 *Reason.*

OUr second reason. In due order, the Seales belong to them to whom the grant is given, *viz.* Baptisme to the seed of the faithfull, and the Lords Supper to beleevers, able to try and examine themselves: But the grant is vouch-

safed to the faithfull and their seed, forgiveneſſe of ſinnes, ſanctification, adoption, and what other good things are promiſed in the covenant of grace are the grant or good things ſealed in the Sacrament. But thoſe are granted to beleevers according to the covenant; and they are ſo linked together, that under one promiſed all are underſtood; and if one be vouchſafed, none is denied. When God promiſeth to circumciſe the heart, the forgiveneſſe of ſinnes is implyed. And when Circumciſion is ſaid to be the Seale of the righteouſneſſe of faith, the circumciſion of the heart by ſpirituall regeneration is included. To whomſoever then the ſpirituall gift, or inward grace of the covenant is given and granted, to them the Seales of that gift and grant doth belong in their due order. But the ſpirituall gift or grace which is the thing ſignified in the Sacrament, is freely granted to true beleevers, who have received the doctrine of ſalvation, and walk in the wayes of truth and righteouſneſſe, therefore the priviledges of the Seales belong unto them. To this you anſwer.

Deut. 30. 6. Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8, 9. Rom. 4. 11. Gen. 17. 11, 12 and 26. 4.

The ſcope of the Apoſtle in the place, *Rom.* 4. 11. is not to define a Sacrament, nor to ſhew what is the proper and adequate ſubject of the Sacrament; but to prove by the example of *Abraham* that a ſinner is juſtified before God, not by works but by faith. Thus as *Abraham* the Father of the faithfull was juſtified before God, ſo muſt his ſeed be (that is, all beleevers whether Jews or Gentiles, circumciſed or uncircumciſed) for therefore *Abraham* received circumciſion which belonged to the Jews to confirm the righteouſneſſe which he had before, while he was uncircumciſed, that he might be the Father of both: but leſt any one ſhould think his circumciſion was needleſſe if he was juſtified by faith before circumciſion; he addeth that his circumciſion was of no uſe as a ſeale to confirme to him his faith, and the righteouſneſſe which is by faith: yet as Juſtification is not the onely thing that Circumciſion ſealed, but the whole Covenant alſo made with *Abraham* and his ſeed was ſealed thereby; ſo *Abraham* is to be conſidered in uſing circumciſion not ſimply, or onely as a beleever without Church relation, but as a confederate beleever, and ſo in the ſtate and order of a viſible Church. Though the Apoſtle maketh mention of the righteouſneſſe of faith as ſealed thereby, which was not that which ſerved for his purpoſe.

Now that Circumciſion alſo ſealed the Church-Covenant, may appear from *Gen.* 17. 9. 10, 11. where you may find that *Abraham* and his ſeed, though beleevers, were not circumciſed till God called them into Church-Covenant; and there is the ſame reaſon & uſe of Baptiſme to us which ſerveth to ſeal our juſtification as circumciſion did, yet not that alone, but alſo the whole covenant with all the priviledges of it, as Adoption, Sanctification, and fellowſhip with Chriſt in affections, and the ſalvation of our ſouls, and the reſurrection of our bodies. And not onely the covenant of grace which is common to all beleevers: but Church-

Act. 2. 38. Gal. 3. 26, 27. Tit. 3. 5. Mat. 20. 23. 1 Pet. 3. 21.

Covenant

1 Cor. 15. 19. Covenant also which is peculiar to confederates. According to that of the Apostle, *By one Spirit we are baptized into one body*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. And by one bodie he meaneth that particular Church of *Corinth* whereunto he writeth and saith, *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular*, ver. 27. And *ergo* Church-membership is required as well to the orderly partaking of Baptisme as it was of Circumcision. Nor do we find that circumcision was administred to all that were in the Covenant of grace (as all beleevers were) but onely to such of them as were joyned to the people of the God of *Abraham*. *Melchizedech* was under the covenant of grace, so was *Lot*, so was *Job* and his foure friends; yet we no where read that they were circumcised, nor do beleeve they were. So that if Circumcision was administred to none but those that were joyned together in *Abrahams* familie, and to the Church of God in his seed, then may not baptisme in ordinarie course be administred to any beleevers now, unlesse they be joyned to the Church of Christ, for *parum par est ratio*. But the first is true, *Ergo*, the second also.

Reply.

THe particulars in this Answer hath been examined alreadie, and might have well been passed over, because it is tedious to repeat the same things againe and againe. Two things are affirmed by you.

1. That the scope of the Apostle, *Rom.* 4. 11. was not to define a Sacrament, nor to shew what was the proper and adequate subject of a Sacrament. But this weakneth no part of the argument, for if the Apostle do not fully define a Sacrament, nor mention every particular benefit or prerogative sealed in the Sacrament; yet he sheweth sufficiently to whom the Sacraments in due order do appertaine, even to the heires of salvation, to them that are justified by faith, and walk in the steps of our Father *Abraham*. And thus we argue from the text of the Apostle. They that are partakers of the good things sealed in the Sacrament, to them belong the Seales of the Covenant, according to Gods Institution. But they that are justified by faith are partakers of the good things sealed in the Sacrament, to them belong the Seales of the Covenant according to Gods institution. If Justification be not the onely thing that Circumcision sealed, this is nothing to the point in hand. For the gifts of the holy Ghost is not the onely thing that is sealed in Baptisme: But you confesse in your Answer immediately going before, that they have right to baptisme who have received the holy Ghost; and the reason is the same of Justification. Besides if Justification be not the onely thing that is sealed in the Sacrament, it is one principall thing which doth inferre the rest. For the blessings of the covenant of grace in Christ are inseparable; where one is named, others are implyed: and where one is given, no one is absolutely wanting. *Christ is made of God wisedome, righteousnesse, sanctification, and redemption*: whom God doth justi- 1 Cor. 1. 30.

fie;

fie, them he doth sanctifie, and them he will glorifie.

2. The second thing you affirme is, that not onely the covenant of grace which is common to all beleevers; but Church-Covenant also which is peculiar to confederates is necessarie to the participation of the Seales. This sense your words must beare, or else they reach not the point in hand: but this is that which should be proved substantially, and not barely affirmed; and which (as we conceive) is contrary to the first Institution of the Sacrament, and the lawfull practise of *John* the Baptist, our Saviour Christ, his Apostles, and all others who are recorded lawfully to administer the Seales. In *Gen.* 17. we find the first Institution of circumcision recorded, and that it was the seale of the Covenant to *Abraham* and his seed, to them that were borne in his house, or bought with his money: but we find no mention of any Church Covenant besides the covenant of promise which God made with *Abraham*. There is no mention of any Church-order into which *Abrahams* family was now gathered more then formerly. God gave circumcision to *Abraham* and his seed as a seale of the righteousnesse of faith; but that this family was first gathered into Church-order as you speak we cannot beleeve, because the Scripture saith it not whether *Lot*, *Job*, *Melchizedech* were circumcised or not, we will not dispute; but if they received not the seale, we cannot think the reason to be because they were not in Church-order as those times required, if any such thing had been required, we cannot think that either they were ignorant of it, or that they walked against their light: But accordiug to the dispensing of those times we judge as they were visible beleevers, so they walked in that Church fellowship which God prescribed; and therefore if circumcision had been the seale of such Church-Covenant as you conceive, it should have been given to them no lesse then to *Abrahams* family. But of this sufficient is said before. As for Baptisme it is the seal of the whole Covenant, which the passages quoted prove it to be. Whether it be the seale of our fellowship which Christ in affliction, and the resurrection of our bodies, we leave it to your consideration: but that it should be a Seal of a Church-Covenant which is peculiar to confederates, that to us is very strange. That it is a solemne admission into the Church of Christ, and that of necessitie it must be administred in a particular societie (though in the passage to the *Corinthians* the mysticall bodie of Christ be understood) will easily be granted. But that it is the seale of any other covenant but the covenant of grace we cannot digest.

The Sacraments are of God, and we must learne of God for what end and use they were ordained. But by the Institution or Baptisme recorded in Scripture we have learned it belongeth to the faithfull, to disciples, to them that are called of God: and as for any other covenant necessarie to the right participation of the Seales, there is deep silence of it in the Institution, in the lawfull and approved practise of the first dispensers of these sacred mysteries. Enough hath been said to this matter alreadie, but we will conclude it with the words of that reverend

reverend Author whom we have cited many times before upon occasion. *Afterwards* (saith he) *John the Baptist walked in the same steps, and by the same rule administred baptisme in the Church whereof he was a member, required of all that came to his baptisme a profession of repentance, and amendment of life for remission of sinnes whereof baptisme was a seale, and preached Christ to them.* This order our Lord Jesus Christ after his resurrection established to continue in the Christian Churches, giving a commission to his Disciples to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to gather all such as should beleeve through the world, as a testimonie to them, that the righteousnesse of faith did belong to them also, and not to the Church of the Jews onely. Accordingly the Apostles and servants of Christ were carefull to observe this rule in their administring baptisme. Thus *Peter* when he saw those three thousand souls pricked in their hearts, preached unto them concerning repentance, remission of sin, Christ, the promise, baptisme, faith, amendment of life, baptised those that gladly received his word, and testified the same by joyning together in the profession thereof. The same course *Philip* took with the Church that was gathered in Samaria, where many were baptized, but none till they professed their beliefe of the Gospel, and their receiving of the Word of God. And therefore it is said expresly, *When they beleeved Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdome of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised both men and women.* When *Ananias* was commanded to go and baptise *Paul*, he objected against it at first, till the Lord assured him that he was one to whom the Seale of the Covenant belonged, and then he went and did it.

Matth. 3. 6. 7. Mark 1. 4. 5. Luk. 13. 3. 16. Matth. 28. 19, 20. Mar. 16. 15, 16. Act. 2. 37. 47. Act. 8. 12. 14. Act 9. 11-17.

When *Peter* and those that came with him saw that the holy Ghost fell on *Cornelius*, and those that were assembled at that time in his house, whilest he spake these words, *To him give all the Prophets Witnesse, that through the Name of Jesus whosoever beleeveth on him shall receive remission of sinnes. Peter* demanded, *Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised, which have received the holy Ghost as well as we?* In this catalogue we see profession of faith and repentance required in them that were admitted to partake in the seals; but there is not a word of Church-Covenant, either in the Institution or administration of the Seales before they were admitted to them. That Christians are solemnly ingrafted into the body of Christ, and into particular Societies by the Seales, is a truth acknowledged on all sides: but that ever it was deemed necessarie, that a Christian should be a set member of a particular Congregationall Church before he were admitted to the Seales, or that by divine institution any such thing is ordained as necessarie thereunto, that upon the grounds before mentioned we denie, and cannot account it lesse then an addition to the institution. For if the Sacraments be seales of the Covenant of grace, and

Act. 10. 43-48.

baptisme by divine Institution belong to Disciples, faithfull, Saints, who have gladly received the Word of grace, are justified by faith, sanctified by the Spirit, adopted to be the children of God by grace, and heires apparent to the kingdom of heaven; then to debarre such from the Seales, and their seed from Baptisme, because they be not in Church-Covenant (as you speake) is an addition to the ordinance of grace, and many wayes injurious to the people of God.

V. Position.

That the power of Excommunication is so in the body of the Church, that what the Major part shall allow must be done, though the Pastors and Governors and the rest of the Assembly be of another minde, and that peradventure upon more substantiall reasons.

Answer.

Vid. Park. Pol. Ecclesiastica. l. 3. c. 1, 2 &c.

IF the Question had been, Whether the power of Excommunication lies in the body of the Congregation, consisting of officers and members; our Answer should be Affirmative, and according hereunto is also our practise, and wee hope your judgement and ours are not different herein: But seeing the Question is, *Whether it is so in the body of the Congregation, that what the Major part doth allow that must be done, though the Pastors and Governors, and the rest of the Assembly, doe dissent upon more substantiall reasons.* Our Answer is Negative, *viz.* that the power of Excommunication is not sealed in the Congregation, neither ought it to be so in any of the Churches of the Lord Jesus, who ought not to carry matters by number of votes against God, as this Position implyeth, but by strength of rule and reason according to God. The power of the Apostles was not to doe things against the truth but for the truth, 2 *Cor.* 13. 8 and not for destruction, but for edification, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. And the same may be said concerning the power which God hath given to the Church, and if any Church among us have swerved from the rule (which is more then we know) we doe not allow them in such a practise, but should be ready as the Lord should helpe to convince them of their sin therein.

Reply.

THis Question is much mistaken, for the demand is not whether in the Congregation matters should be carryed by number of votes against God, as you interpret the Position, but whether the power of Excommunication so lye in the body of the Congregation as that sentence must proceed *in externo foro*, according to the vote and determination of the *Major* part, and so whether power of admission

admission of members doe so reside in the communitie, as that they must be refused whom the *Major* part refuse, though the Pastors and Governors and part of the Congregation be of another judgement, and he admitted whom the *Major* part doth approve. And though the Church hath received no power against God, but for God, yet in the execution of the power no doubt the members of that Church may be of different judgements and affections, wherein the one side or other doth erre, and is deceived. Now the Question hereupon moved is, whether the power of the keyes be so given and committed to the society of the faithfull, as that in externall Court that act or sentence must stand and be in force which the greater part shall determine amongst them which hold the power of the keyes to be given to the Church. Some[a] distinguish betwixt the power it self wch they give to the Church, and the execution and exercise of it, which they confine to the Presbytery: [b] Others give the power of the keyes with the exercise thereof to the whole body of the Church, or if in the dispensation they attribute any thing to the Officers, it is but as servants of the Church, from whom they derive their authoritie. By *Church* also some understand the communitie of the faithfull, together with their officers and guides. And here lyeth the stone at which they of the Seperation stumble, and which we conceive to be your judgement and practise, wherein we required your plaine answer, with your reasons, but have received no satisfaction. You referre us to M^r. *Parkers* reasons to prove the power of the keyes to belong to the whole Church, who are of farre different judgement from M^r. *Parker* in the point it selfe. And if your judgement and practise be according to that of the Seperation (which we feare) you dissent from him, and we cannot but dissent from you upon these considerations.

a *Fen. Theol. lib. 7. Park. de Pol. lib. 3. c. 1. J. D. Apol. 27. Sect. exam. pa. 238, 239, 240.*

b *Rob.* against *Ber. pa.* 182. By two or three are meant the meanest communion or societie of Saints, with or without Officers. *Rob.* against *Ber.* Certaine observations, *p.* 4 Onely he that is of the true visible Church and furnished with the power of Christ, the keyes of the kingdome for the Censure can admonish his brother in order, and those degrees which the word prescribeth *Mat.* 28. 15. 17. *Id. pa* 99. The power as to receive in, so to cut off any member is given to the whole body together of every Christian Congregation, and not to any one member apart, or to more members sequestred from the whole, using the meetest number for pronouncing the Censures, *Id. pa.* 124-126.

1. No power agreeth to the multitude or communitie of the faithfull, but that which is given them of the Lord by his positive Law; For the whole spirituall power for the gathering and government of his Church is given to Christ as Mediator. And if the power of the keyes be derived from, and communicated by Christ unto his Church, of necessitie it must draw its originall from divine positive Law, and can agree to none but as it is communicated. But the communicated power of the keyes with the

If the brethren have libertie in the ordinance of Prophesying, they have also libertie in the other ordinance of Excommunication, for they are

both of the same nature; Looke to whom Christ gave the one key of Knowledge, to them he gave the other key of Discipline; *Rob.* against *Bern. pa.* 238, 239.

execution thereof, Christ hath not given immediately to the whole multitude, but to some persons and Officers designed and appointed thereunto. Peruse the severall passages of Scripture, wherein power and authoritie of preaching the Gospel, administring the Sacraments, binding and loosing is given to the Church: and it is apparent that distinct severall persons are spoken of, and not the whole communitie; *Goe teach* Mat. 28. 19 28. *all Nations, and baptize them, &c. Whose sinnes yee remit, they are re-* Joh. 20. 21, 22. *mitted, &c. Feed my Lambes, feed my sheepe, &c.* Were these things & 21. 15, 16. spoken to the whole communitie, or to speciall persons?

2. If Christ gave this power to the communitie, was it from the beginning of the Church, or tooke it effect after the Churches were planted and established by the Apostles. Not the first, for then the Apostles themselves should derive their Gal. 1. 1. power from the communitie and societie of the faithfull, which Ioh 21. 22. they did not, but from Christ immediately, both in respect of gifts *Whit. de pont.* and graces, their calling it selfe, and the designation of their *q.* 8. *c.* 2. 3. persons.

It is said the power of the keyes given to the Apostles was given to the Church, *In tuitu ejusdem tanquam finis & totius.* And it is true the Apostles were given to the Church, and the power they received was for the good of the whole; but this is not enough. That power may be said to be received immediately by the Church, as the first receptacle of it, and from it derived to others. But this power must be in the communitie as the first subject, from whom it commeth to the Officers. As the power of seeing is not onely given *in tuitu hominis*, as the end of it, and the *totum* to whom it agreeth, but is *in homine* as the first subject from which it commeth to the eyes. The Apostles and other Governors were given of Christ for the Church as for their end, and all their authoritie was given unto them for the Church as for the whole: but the authoritie it selfe was immediately derived from Christ, and is not in the Church as the immediate subject, nor derived from the Church, but from Christ the King of the Church. The authoritie of Governors is given of Christ for a gift to the Church, but not for a gift absolute, that it may reside in the power of the whole Church, to whom it is given, but for a conditionall gift communicated to the Governors themselves for the good of the whole. It is one thing then to aske for what end or use the keyes are given, another to whom. To every one is given the declaration of the Spirit for profit, *i. e.* for the good of the Church. But was this gift given to the communitie of the faithfull first and immediately? No; By gift and possession it was given to some, but for use and profit it was publick.

1 Cor. 3. 22. & 4. 1.
1 Tim. 3. 15. *Authoritas rectorum pro dono quidem ecclesiæ à Christo data est, sed non pro dono absoluto, ut penes totam Ecclesiam resideat cui datur, sed pro dono conditionali, ut rectoribus ipsis communicetur ad totius ædificationem, Park. de Polit. lib. 3. cap. 8.*

1 Cor. 12. 7.
1 Cor. 3. 12.
1 Tim. 3. 15.
1 Cor. 4. 1.

After

After the Churches were established it tooke not effect; for then it must be shewed where Christ committed the power of God, first to the Apostles, and after to the communitie of the faithfull. But that is no where to be found in holy scripture. The Ministers and guides of the Church were immediately of Jesus Christ, from whom immediately they derive their power and authoritie, by whom they are set over their charge, in whose Name they must execute their office, whose Stewards, Legates and Ambassadors they are, and unto whom they must give an account. Act. 20. 28. Eph. 4. 8. 11. 1 Co. 12. 28, 29 2 Co. 5. 19, 20. Tit. 1. 7.

Yea, Pastorship is the gift of Christ no lesse then Apostleship, and that the more because it is perpetuall in the Church; every Pastor is not immediately called, but the Office and order of Pastors, the calling, authoritie and jurisdiction is immediately from Christ, and not from the Church: The Steward is appointed of the Master of the family alone, and hath all his authoritie and jurisdiction from him: Every Ambassador in the cause of his ambassage doth immediately depend upon him from whom he is sent. But if the function, order and authoritie of Pastors and Teachers, be immediately from Christ, then it is not received from the Church as the immediate receptacle. Thus Protestant Divines dispute against Papists. If Bishops receive their power and authority of exercising immediately from Christ, by mandate, mission, and commission from him, then they derive it not from the Pope. And if Presbyters receive their order jurisdiction and power of execution from Christ by his mandate and Commission, then they receive it not from the Bishop. And by the same reason, if the power of the keyes be the immediate gift of Christ to his Ministers, then they derive not their power and authoritie from the people. It is usually objected that the Church cannot convey what she never had, but the people may Elect their Pastor. Whereunto the answer is direct and plaine. Nothing can give that which it had not formally or virtually, unlesse it give it as an instrument ministring to one who hath it, but so it may give what it never had, nor is capable of. A Steward may give all the offices in his Masters house, as ministerially executing his Masters pleasure. Electors have not evermore authoritie over him whom they elect: but power and authoritie onely to apply that power to him whom they choose. The power and authoritie whereunto a Minister is elected, is not in the people that elect him, but from Christ the King and head of his Church, who out of power doth conferre that office upon him. If we consider what men give, or give not universally, it must be deemed that any men can make Ministers, because they give not the office, gifts, or authoritie, which are from Christ alone.

Successor habet jurisdictionē ab eo à quo prædecessor, alioqui non verè succedit. But Pastors and Teachers are the Successors of the Apostles. *Whit. de pont. q. 8. c. 3.*

Fr: Victor rel. 2. de potest Ecclesiæ q. 2. Alphons. de Castr. li. 2. c. 24. de hæret. Whit. de pont. q. 8. c. 1.

Cham. panstr. tom. 2. lib. 11. c. 18. sect. 11.

3. If Ecclesiasticall and spirituall power be in the multitude and

community of the faithfull, the Church doth not onely call, but make Officers out of power and vertue received into her selfe, and then should the Church have a true lordlike power in regard of her Ministers.

In the Church the Officers are the Ministers of the people, whose service the people is to use for administration and executing their judgements, that is, pronouncing the judgement of the Church (and of God first) against the obstinate. *Rob.* against *Ber. p.* 136. The Officers in the Church are both Christs and the peoples Servants and Ministers *Id. p.* 165.

For as he that will derive authority to the Church maketh himselfe Lord of the Church: so if the Church derive authoritie to the Ministers of Christ, she maketh herself Lady and Mistris over them in the exercise of that authoritie over them. For all men know it is the property of the Lord and Master to impart authoritie. Did the Church give power and authoritie to the Pastors and Teachers, she might make the Sacraments and preaching which one doth in order no Sacraments, no preaching. For it is the order instituted of God that gives being and efficacie to these ordinances. And if the power of ruling, feeding, and dispensing the holy things of God, do reside in the faithfull, the Word and Sacraments in respect of dispensation and efficacie shall depend upon the order and institution of the Societie. If the power of the keyes be derived from the community of the faithfull, then are Officers immediately and formally servants to the Church, and must do every thing in the name of the Church, Rule, feed, bind, loose, remit and retaine sinnes, preach and administer the Sacraments, then they must performe their Office according to the direction of the Church more or lesse, seldome or frequent, remisse or diligent. For from whom are they to receive direction how to carry themselves in their Office but from him or them from whom they receive their Office, whose works they do, and from whom they expect their reward? If their power and office be of God immediately, they must do the duties of their place according to his designement, and to be accountable unto God: But if their power and function be from the Church, the Church must give account unto God, and the Officers unto the Church whom she doth take to be her helpers.

Ames Bel. enerv. tom. 2. l. 3. c. 1. Ministri Ecclesiastici sunt Ecclesiæ tanquam objecti circa quod versantur ministri sunt Christi tanquam principalis causæ & Domini à quo pendent ministri sed nullo modo episcoporum.

If it be said that God will have the Church to chuse Officers to execute the power committed unto her. The answer is, either God will have her elect officers of his designement to do his work according to that power which he shall give them, and by his direction, and then they are Gods servants, and not the Churches, and receive their charge and function immediately from God, and not from the people: or he leaveth it to the arbitriment of the Church, to chuse according to their pleasure such as must receive charge and authoritie from her. And then they must execute their office in her name so as shall seeme good unto the Church, and neither longer nor otherwise. For if the Ministers of the

Church be subject to God and Christ by the intervention of the people onely, they have it from them, and not from God: but they preach or administer the Sacraments, rule, or feed, and if they depend immediately upon the faithfull, *viz.* two or three gathered together in covenant, they must draw what in order they are to preach unto them in the name of the Lord; For from him must the Ambassadour learne his arrand from whom he receiveth his Commission. We forbeare to presse the[a] confessions and reasons of such as maintaine this opinion, that the officers of Christ be both of and for the people, and that in relation as the officers are called servants, the Church may be called Lord.

Omnis legatus in causâ legationis suæ immediatè pendet ab eo à quo mittitur, & instrumento mandatorum in corrupto est indelebili.

a We denie the order of Elders to be superiour to the order of Saints, since it is not an order of mastership but of service. *Rob.* against *Bern. pa.* 201. It were a strange thing that men could have no command over their servants, as I have oft shewed the Church-officers to be her servants. *Id. p.* 214. The order of servants is inferiour to the order of them whose servants they are: but the order of Church-officers is an order of servants, and they by office to serve the people, *Id. p.* 215. 227.

4. Moreover if the power of the keyes be given first and immediately to the community of the faithfull, what reason can be alledged why in defect of Officers the Church might not rule, governe, feed, bind, loose, preach and administer the Sacraments, or if any faile in any office, why she might not supply that want by her power. For the power of the keyes doth containe, both authority and exercise, power being given to this end, that it might be exercised as it is vouchsafed. But the Church when she is destitute of Officers, cannot exercise those acts of rule, nor by her power supply the want of any Officer. Onely she hath a ministery of calling one whom Christ hath described, that from Christ he may have power of office given him in the vacant place. For these reasons (not to insist on any more) we judge the multitude or community of the faithfull not to be the immediate receptacle of Ecclesiasticall authoritie, and so the power of excommunication not to belong to them. If consent of the Churches of God be asked in this point (to omit others) the Churches of *Scotland* speake fully and expresly for us, in the second book of *Disci. cap.* 1. *The Church as it is taken for them that exercise spirituall functions in the congregation of them that professe the truth, hath a certain power granted by God according to which, it useth a proper Jurisdiction and government exercised to the comfort of the whole flocke. Power is an Ecclesiasticall authority granted by God the Father through the Mediator Jesus Christ unto his Kirke, gathered, and having its ground in the Word of God, and to be put in execution by them unto whom the spirituall government of the Church by lawfull calling is committed. The policie of the Kirke flowing from this power is an order or spirituall forme of government which is exercised by the members appointed thereto by the Word of God, and therefore is given immediately to the office-bearers by whom it is exercised to the weale of the whole body.*

Ut universam scripturam evolvat D. Erastus, nunquam tamen inventurum verbâ Ligandi, & Solvendi aliis quam publico ministerio fungentibus, & quidem metaphoricè, divinæ videlicet & spiritualis potestatis respectu, tribui. Sunt enim judicialia hæc verba. &c. Beza de Presb. p 60. See Helvet. conf. ca. 18. Sect. Nunc ergo. &c. Belgic. confess. art. 3. Argentinens. conf. art. 13. Bohem. confes. art. 14.

VI. Position.

That none are to be admitted as members but they must promise not to depart or remove unlesse the Congregation will give leave.

Answer.

OUr Answer hereto is briefly this. We judge it expedient and most according to rule, that such brethren as are in covenant with the Church, and ours as fellow-members, and have committed their soules to our charge as Ministers, should not forsake our fellowship, nor obruptly breake away from us when and whither they please; but first approve themselves therein to their brethrens consciences, and take their counsell in so weightie a matter. For which we propound to consider these two reasons following. The former is drawne from the nature of the Church-Covenant, which consists in these foure particulars.

1. Every member at his admission doth openly professe, and solemnly promise, that by Christs helpe assisting, he will not onely in generall give up himselfe (as to the Lord to be guided by him, so) to the Church according to God to be directed by it, which is no more then the members of the Church of *Macedonia*, did in a parallel case, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. but also in particular, that he will performe all duties of brotherly love and faithfulnesse to all the members of the body, as of diligent watchfulnesse over all his brethren, thereby to prevent sin, so of faithfull admonition after their falls to regaine them to the Lord, from their sinne, the former being injoyned, *Hebr.* 3. 13. And the want thereof deeply condemned in *Cain*, that would not acknowledge that duty of being his brothers keeper, *Gen.* 4. 9. the latter given in charge to the Church-members of Israel by the hand of *Moses*, *Levit.* 19. 17. and so by Christ himself, *Matth.* 18 15. And by *Paul* also to the *Galat. c.* 6. 1, 2.

Secondly, the ingagements are not made onely by the members admitted into the Church, but by the Church back again to the member. So that thereby the whole Church in generall, and every member thereof in particular, stand as well in conscience bound to performe all duties of love and watchfulnesse to him, as he doth to them; And this we do according to the golden rule of love and equitie injoyned by our Saviour, *Matth.* 7. 12. fearing that contrary practise of Scribes and Pharisees so much condemned by Christ, of laying greater burthens

burthens upon others, then we our selves are willing to undergo. *Matth.* 23. 4.

3. These promises thus lawfully and mutually made, that member, as also the whole Church, are bound not onely every one for himselfe, actively to performe them, but passively also to suffer his brethren to do those offices upon and towards himself: If he neglect the former, he shall falsifie his covenant so solemnly before God, Angels, and men made, and so not onely breake promise to his brother, contrary to *Psal.* 15. 4. but also in some sort commit the sinne of *Ananias* and *Saphira* in lying against the holy Ghost, condemned and punished severely by Gods own hand, *Act.* 5. 3. 5. 10. If he faile in the latter, he shall not onely be guiltie of the same sinne of breach of Covenant with God and man as in the former; but shall also be guilty of this folly of despising counsell so much condemned, *Prov.* 12. 15. and 1. 7. and shall also proclaime this his folly and pride by shewing to all the Church that he is wise in his own eyes, and leanes to his own wisedome both reproved, *Prov.* 3. 7. and 23. 4. Seeing need of no further light to be held forth by his brethren, then what he apprehends himselfe, which is one of the greatest properties of folly.

4. From all these things premised, it appears that we can do no lesse (and yet we do no more) then require a member before he depart according to our covenant thus lawfully, deliberately, and mutually made, to expresse to his brethren his desire of departing, and the place and societie to which he tends, whether to a godly Church where he may be edified; or to some corrupt Assembly where he may be destroyed. And 2. his grounds and reasons which move him so to do, which if they hold good being scanned by the Word, he may be not onely confirmed in his way by the consent and advise of many, but counselled also how to manage his departure for his best comfort. And so after all, solemnly with the whole Churches prayers, and blessings in the name of Christ dismissed: But if his grounds either be none at all, or weake and sinfull, and that his desire of departing savours of self-will, inordinate love of gaine, rash precipitancie, or a spirit of schisme, more strongly then of sound reason, then what can we do lesse without breach of Covenant, then in love and tendernesse shew him his weaknesse, disswade him from his purpose, and refuse to consent. Yet if after all this we see his spirit stedfastly and stiffely bent for a departure, then though we dare not act against our light by consenting or counselling, yet if his sinne be not apparent, and danger eminent, we use rather (through indulgence in cases of like nature) to suspend our vote against him, as not willing against his will to detain him, abhorring to make our Churches places of restraint and imprisonment. But if any should object that this argument holds firme where this Church-Covenant is allowed to be lawfull, but with some it is questioned, and with them it avails not. *Ans.* Some indeed have questioned the necessitie of our Church-Covenant, but none (we hope) of these our reverend brethren that we write unto do question the lawfulnesse of such a Covenant being nothing else for the

matter of it, but a promise of doing such Christian duties as the Gospel of Christ requires of all Saints in Church-estate; for we doe not herein promise to performe any new dutie to our brethren which was not before commanded us of the Lord, but onely revive and renew our purposes afresh of performing such duties unto that particular body into which we are then incorporated as were before injoyned in the Word, as to love each other, and to watch over each other out of love for their good, to be ready to give counsell to, and to take counsell from each other, to prevent sinne in them, or to gaine them from sinne. All which are plentifully and frequently held forth in the Scriptures; for the defect of which care and watchfulnesse, all the body shall be wrapt in the same guilt & punishment with the member that commits the sinne, as the whole Church of *Israel* was in *Achans* sinne and punishment.

Heb. 13. 1. Pro. 12. 19. & 17. 23. Gen 4. 4. 9. Levit. 19. 17. Mat. 18. 15. Gal. 6. 1.

Secondly, Its a thing very reasonable, and a knowne fundamentall rule in all societies, that he that is incorporate thereto, and so participates of the priviledges thereof, should ingage himselfe to conforme to all such lawfull rites and orders as are expedient for the well being of that societie, the contrary whereto will be a thing injurious in him to offer, and confusion to themselves to accept.

The second ground is drawne from the necessitie that may fall upon the body if every particular member should depart at his owne pleasure. For as every societie, so much more a Church of Saints, both from principles of nature and Christianitie also, not onely lawfully may, but in dutie are bound to endeavour the preservation of it selfe, and *Ergo* timely to foresee and wisely to prevent all such things as would bring destruction to it selfe. Now if any member might, when, whither, and wherefore he please without consent of the Church depart away from it, this may by unavoydable consequence dissipate the whole; for if one man may so depart, why may not another also, though never so usefull in that body, and whose absence might much shake the well-being of it: and if one why not two, six, ten, twentie as well? For where will yee stop seeing any may plead the same libertie, and if members may so doe why not the Pastor and Teacher also? Seeing they are tyed to him by the same relation that he is to them, and so the principalls falling, the whole building must downe: and if this may be so in one Church, why not in all, and so Christ should have no setled Church on earth.

Reply.

IT is one thing abruptly to breake away when and whither they please, and forsake fellow-ship, another thing not to depart or remove habitation, unlesse the Congregation will give leave. Also it is one thing mutually to compound and agree not to depart from each other without consent and approbation, another to require a promise of all that be admitted into societie, that they shall not depart without the Churches allowance. If such a promise be required of

all

all members to be admitted, we cannot discerne upon what grounds your practise is warranted. First, you exclude all such as be not set members from the Sacrament of the Supper, and their children from Baptisme, and yet hinder them from entrance into Church societie, because they cannot promise continuance in the place where they are resident for the present. Here we desire to be satisfied from the word of God by what you require it. Did the Apostles ever stipulate with such as desired to be baptized, that they must abide in particular societie, and not remove thence without approbation from the Church? or did they deny the seales unto them, because they could not make any such promise? Was it ever heard of in the Church of God from the beginning thereof unto this day, that any such thing was propounded unto, or required of, members to be admitted into Church-fellowship? That Church Covenant which is necessary was not in use in the Apostles times, but the Covenant they entred into bound no man to this condition for ought we reade. They did not prescribe it, no Church ever yet covenanted it as necessary to the preservation of the body.

Secondly, It pertaines not to the whole Congregation to take notice of, be acquainted with, or judge of the cause of every particular members removall. May not a servant remove from his Master to another Congregation? or the father bestow his sonne or daughter in marriage to one of another Congregation, but the whole Church must be called to counsell in this matter? If the Assembly once grow to be populous, of necessitie they must be negligent in, or weary of such an heavy taske; and for the present, for every one to challenge so much authoritie over other is usurpation. Let it be shewed that ever by divine right this power was committed to the Church, and then we will confesse it to be expedient and necessary. But till then we thinke the Church is over ridged in exacting such a condition of the members, and the members themselves goe beyond their measure as busi-bodies in other mens matters, and things whereof they are not well able to judge many times, if they arrogate such power unto themselves wee allow not rashnesse, or precipitancy, pride or self-conceitednesse, we know it is meete that weightie matters should be mannaged by Councell, but it is not necessary to bring every particular thing to the whole Church. *In the multitude of Councellors there is peace*, but over many Councellors oft causeth distraction, and different apprehensions breed delayes. The nature of your Church-Covenant, as you describe it, inferreth not a necessitie of bringing every such businesse unto the Church; for you binde your selves mutually to watch over one another, and in love to admonish one another in the Lord, to prevent sinne and to encourage in well-doing, as it concerneth every man within the limits of his place and calling. But this essentially tyeth not any man to a perpetuall residence in one place, for then even occasionall absence should be a breach of Covenant, unlesse it be by consent and approbation of the Church.

You say in your Covenant you promise to performe no new dutie to your

brethren which was not before commanded of the Lord, but onely revive and renew your purposes afresh of performing such duties to that particular body into which you are then to be incorporated, as were before injoyned in the Word. But in the word of truth, it is not commanded either expressly or by consequent, that no member of a Congregation should remove, or occasionally be absent from the place of his habitation, before he have acquainted the Church whither he goeth, and upon what occasions, and whether the place be dangerous, where he is likely to be infected; or safe, where he may be edified. These things are matters of weight and to be undertaken with advice, but the knowledge thereof belongeth not to every particular member of the societie. And the Church shall burden her selfe above measure if she take upon her to intermeddle in all such occasions. Neither is it safe to commit the determination of such matters ever to the vote of the multitude, or weight of reasons, as they shall apprehend the matter. And if such businesse must be determined on the Lords day, and to goe before the administration of the Word, Sacraments, and almes, least the holy things be polluted by notorious obstinate offenders, wee feare the time appointed for the exercise of Religion shall be prophaned with unseasonable disputes. Instances might be alledged, if it were a matter to be insisted upon.

Rob. ag. Bern. pa. 230.

As for the Covenant it selfe which you mutually enter into, if therein you exact nothing but what God requires both for tryall and stipulation, far be it that we should disallow it, but if yee constraine men to meddle with things that belong not to them, and winde them up higher then God would, and straine every thing to the pitch that you seeme here to doe in this branch a godly and sober minde may well pause before he make such promise. All members of the Church are not equally necessary to the preservatiō of the whole body; & if to the removall of some, it were expedient to have the cōsent not only of the whole society, but of neighbouring societies, Ministers especially, it is very much to draw this to the removall or abode of every particular member. And if any man shall not intermeddle with every businesse of this kinde, as questioning whether it doth belong to him or no, or not aske the advice of the whole societie, as knowing the most to be unfit to counsell in such a case, doth he break his Covenant therein, and so commit a sinne in a sort like the sinne of *Ananias* and *Saphira*? Judge your selves if in other cases you would not censure this to be an high incroachment upon Christian libertie, and a strict binding of mens consciences by humane constitutions. May you not expect to heare from your own grounds that herein you have devised an expedient, or necessary rite or custome to preserve the unitie, and prevent the dissolution of the body, which never came into the minde of the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of the Church, and that in so doing (if your exposition will hold good) you breake the second Commandement. Rites and customes expedient to prevent confusion for the time, let them be observed

served as customes expedient, and what God requires in the examination or admission of members, let that take place according to the presidents given in the Scriptures, and the constant practise of the universall Church in the purest times. But to presse customes onely expedient for the time, as standing rules necessary at all times, and for all persons, to put that authoritie into the hands of men which God never put upon them, to oblige men to intermeddle further in the affaires of men, then the Word doth warrant, to binde the conscience, and that under so heavy a penalty as the sinne of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, where God hath not bound it, and to debarre known and approved Christians from the Seales of the Covenant, because they cannot promise as setled members to abide and stay in the societie, unlesse they shall obtaine leave of the Congregation to depart, and to charge them in the meane season to be men, who against light refuse subjection to the Gospel; this is that which we cannot approve, which yet wee suspect will follow from your judgement, and desire to be resolved of in your practise. And here we intreat leave to put you in minde of that which you have considered already, *schil.* That the Church and every member thereof hath entred into Covenant, either expressly or implicitely to take God for their God, and to keepe the words of the Covenant and doe them, to seeke the Lord with all their hearts, and to walke before him in truth and uprightnesse: but we never finde that they were called to give account of the worke of grace wrought in their soules, or that the whole Congregation were appointed to be Judge thereof. *You stand all of you this day* (saith *Moses*) *before the Lord your God, &c. that thou shouldst enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God.* All the people that were borne in the Wildernesse *Joshua* circumcised, but it is incredible to thinke that among that great multitude, there was not one who did not give good testimony of the worke of grace in his soule: We reade often times that *Israel* after some grievous fall and revolt, renewed their Covenant, to walke with God, to serve him onely, and to obey his voyce, as in the dayes of *Joshua*, the *Judges*, *David*, *Samuel*: Also *Joash*, *Josiah*, and *Nehemiah*, *&c.* But no particular enquiry was made, what worke of grace God had wrought in the hearts of every singular person. But the confession and profession of obedience was taken. When *John Baptist* began to preach the Gospel, and gather a new people for Christ, he admitted none to Baptisme but upon confession of their sinnes; but we reade of no question that he put forth unto them to discover the worke of grace in their soules, or repelled any that voluntarily submitted themselves upon that pretence. It appeareth many wayes that when the Apostles planted Churches, they made a Covenant between God and the people whom they received. But they received men upon the profession of

Exod. 24. 37. Deut. 2. 14. & 4. 3. 4. & 9. 7.
Ezek. 16. 6. 8. Nũ. 23. 48. 50. Deut. 29. 10. 11, 12.
Josh 24. 1. 14. 23, 24, 25. Iudg. 2. 8. 11. & 3. 9. 15. & 6. 7. & 10. 10-17. 2 Chr. 15. 12 2 Kin. 11. 17. & 23. 3. 2 Chr. 34. 31. Heb. 10 29. 30
Act. 2. 38. & 8. 37. & 19. 17, 18, 19.

faith, and promise of amendment of life, without strict inquirie what sound work of grace was wrought in the soul. In after ages, strangers from the covenant were first instructed in the faith, and then baptised upon the profession of faith, and promise to walk according to the covenant of grace. Now the profession at first required of all that were received to baptisme was that they beleeved in the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost. This was the confession of the Eunuch when he was baptised, *I beleeve that Jesus Christ is the Sonne of God.* The Creed is honoured of the ancients with glorious titles, as the rule of faith, the summe of faith, the body of faith, the perswasions of faith: but by the Creed they understand that rule of faith, and law of faith, and institution of Christ which was then given when he was about to ascend into heaven, and commanded his disciples, saying, *Go teach all Nations, &c.* It is true, that in after times as occasion required some other Articles were added as explanations of the former, to meet with the heresies of the times which began to trouble the Church. But for substance of matter in things to be beleeved, the Church never required other acknowledgement of them that were to be received into the congregation of Christs flock, and admitted into her communion. And for things to be done, or the practicall part, she requireth of them that were to be received to baptisme an abrenuntiation of the devill, the world, and the flesh, with all their sinfull works and lusts.

Act. 8. 37.

The first principles then of the doctrine of Christ being received, and the foresaid profession being made, the Apostles, and the Church following the example of the Apostles, never denied baptisme unto such as sought or desired it. If this be the Covenant that members admitted into Church-fellowship do enter into, and this be all you require of them whom you receive, you have the practise of the Apostles, and the whole Church in after ages for your president. But if you proceed further then thus, and put men to declare what worke of grace God hath wrought in their soul, in this or that way, which perhaps is not determined by the word of grace, at least not agreed upon among your selves, we beseech you consider by what authority you do it, and upon what grounds you stand. But we will enter no further upon this matter, because it comes not within the compasse of these Positions, and to attribute so much to private letters, as to make them the ground of another dispute we may not.

VII. Position.

That a Minister is so a Minister of a particular Congregation, that if they dislike him unjustly, or leave him, he ceaseth to be a Minister.

Answer.

OUr Answer to this consists in two branches. 1. In case a Minister be set aside by the Church meerly through his own default. 2. By the Churches default

default without any desert of his. In the former case it is evident he ceaseth to be a Minister to them any longer, as appears in foure conclusions.

1. It is cleare from the Word, that a Pastor or Teacher in these dayes hath no Apostolicall power over all Churches, but onely limited to that one Church where God hath set him. *Paul* gives not the Elders at *Ephesus* a generall Commission to go teach all Churches, but to go feed that one flock over which the holy Ghost hath made them over-seers. *Act.* 20.28. So *Peter* gives direction to Elders to feed that flock of God onely which was among them, and take the over-sight thereof. 1 *Pet.* 5.2.

2. It is as cleare that all this power of feeding which the Minister hath in that Church is nextly derived to him from Christ by the Church, who hath solemnly called him to the work, and promised to obey him therein: for if he have it elsewhere, it must be either from Christ immediately, or from some other men deputed by Christ to conferre it on him, or he must take it up of himselfe. Not the first, for that was proper to the Apostles or Apostolicall men, therefore *Paul* proving his Apostleship, saith he was called *not of men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ himself. Gal.* 1. 1. Not the second, for we never read in Gods Word that any ordinary Officers, or other besides the Church, that had any Commission given them from Christ to call Ministers unto Churches. Not the third, for no man taketh this honour, *viz.* of a Priest under the Law, or of a Minister under the Gospel, but he that is called of God, *Hebr.* 5.4. Therefore it must needs be from Christ by the Church.

3. As the Church in the name of Christ gave this power to a Minister to be what he is, and do what he doth amongst them: when such a Minister shall make and manifest himself apparently, unworthy, and unfit to discharge the place, which they thus called him unto, so that they may discerne that Christ the head of the Church hath refused him, from being a Minister unto him, they may then upon as good grounds depose him from it, as they called him to it.

4. When a Church hath thus in Christs name put forth this power of shutting, as before it did of opening to a Minister, then he must cease to be a Minister unto them any more, for we know no such indelible character imprinted upon a Minister, that the Ministery ceasing, the Minister ceaseth also.

2. In case the Church shall without cause, or sufficient weightie cause, rashly or wilfully set him aside whom Christ hath set over them, and whom they so solemnly called, and promised before the Lord to submit unto, and so abuse their power given them by Christ; it is doubtlesse a very great wrong unto the Minister, and sinne against Christ himselfe before whom it was done; and not onely Christ himself will take it ill at their hands, for such contempt done to him in his Ministers according to Christs speech, *Luke* 10.16. *He that rejecteth you, rejecteth me.* And Gods speech, 1 Sam. 8. 7. *They have not cast off thee but me.* But even other Churches also may admonish them. And if they prove obstinate

therein, withdraw the right hand of fellowship from them; and concerning the Minister himself thus deposed, seeing it is done not by Christ, but by the Church without Christ, yea against the mind of Christ, we conceive though he be by them deprived of the execution of his ministery among them, yet untill he accepts of a call to another people, he doth yet still remain a Minister of Christ, in whose account (notwithstanding such deposition) he hath true right of administration among that people.

Reply.

THe question is of Ministers unjustly forsaken, or driven from the Church or congregation: and your answer is for the most part of Ministers set aside or deprived through their own default. We never purposed to speak one word for any unworthy Minister whom Christ hath put out of office, and therefore your labour to prove that such justly rejected by the Church are no longer Ministers might well have been saved. But setting them aside, we will in few words examine your conclusions upon which you bind the certainty of that sentence you passe against them.

First, it is certain and clear from the Word, that a Pastor or Teacher neither in these dayes hath, nor in any other age of the Church, ought to have Apostolicall power over all Churches. The Apostles had onely power to serve the Church with the personall service of their Apostleship. But pastorall power of ordinarie Ministers or Teachers they never had: and if the Apostles had not the power of ordinarie Ministers, much lesse can Pastors receive the power of Apostles, for Christ gave both the one and the other order. But as the Apostles were not Pastors of that Church to which they preached, and among whom they continued for some space; no more do Pastors become Apostles if they preach the Word, or dispence the Sacraments to another flock or people beside their own, whereof they have the speciall oversight. But of this matter we have spoken before, and of the texts of Scripture here alledged, therefore we will not repeat what hath been said alreadie: onely it seemeth somewhat strange, that you should cite those texts of Scripture, as if the Apostle had said, feed one flock, or feed that flock of God onely. For we find the word (one) or (onely) neither in the text expresly, nor in the sense for which it is here alledged, *viz.* as if he might not perform any ministeriall act in another Congregation upon any occasion whatsoever.

Secondly, the power of feeding which the Minister hath is neither confined to one societie onely, nor nextly derived to him from Christ by the Church. The office and authoritie of a Pastor is immediately from Christ. The deputation of the person which Christ hath designed is from the Church ministerially, but neither virtually nor formally. The consent of the people is requisite in the election of Pastors and Teachers we grant, the direction of the Elders going be-

fore

fore or along with them; but the authoritie, office, and gift of a Pastor is not from the people or Elders, but from Christ alone. When an Apostle was to be chosen in the place of *Judas*, *Act.* 1. 22, 23. no one had the handling of that businesse, but *Peter* declared unto the brethren present, what an one ought to be taken, and they present two, whereof one was elected by lot. In this example somethings are extraordinarie, for one onely was to be chosen, and that immediately by God himselfe: and somethings ordinarie for our imitation. For if *Peter* would do nothing without consent of the disciples, thenmay not ordinarie elections be passed without consent and approbation of the Church, but it is not a popular election, not governed by the fore-direction of Elders, which is concluded from this passage of Scripture: but a Church election by the free consent, and judgement of the faithfull with the fore-leading of the Presbyterie. When Deacons were to be chosen, *Act.* 6. 1. 6. in the Church of Jerusalem, it was done by the consent of the Church. The mutinie of the *Hellenists* against the *Hebrews* occasioned that election, but was no cause why it was made by free consent. The Apostles shew what persons must be chosen, and who ever thought the Church was left at libertie to chuse as she please without direction. But in this election the people did first chuse, the Apostles onely directing whom the people ought to make choice of: when most commonly the Apostles instructed the people, and went before them in the election, and they consented. *Act.* 14. 23. The Apostles by consent chose Elders, and so in every matter of great importance belonging directly to the whole bodie of the Church, whether severally in one congregation, or joyntly in many, the consent of the faithfull by observation of the Apostles was required. *Act.* 11. 22. and 15. 22. and 16. 4. 1 *Cor.* 8. 19. But in the primitive times after the Apostles, one Church might elect and chuse a Pastor for another. As *Ignatius* exhorts the Phyladelphians, that they would elect a Pastor for the Church of Antioch. And so when the East Church was infected with Arrianisme, *Basil. epist.* 69. 70. 74. thought it a fit meanes to remove the heresie, if the Bishops of Italie being sent thither did condemne the heresie, and he imploreth the aid of the Bishops of Italy, France, and all the East. *Cyprian* saith, all Bishops *sunt mutuæ concordiæ glutine copulati*: that if any hold heresie the rest should help. It would be too long to reckon up examples which in this case might be produced. If here it be questioned whether your election of the people be essentiall to the calling of a Minister: We answer. 1. A thing is essentiall two wayes. First, as absolutely necessarie, so that the thing can have no existence without it. Secondly, as necessarie to the integritie of the thing, so that it is maimed without it.

Whit. de pont. q. 1 ca. 1. p. 14.

Ep. 13. li. 3.

Againe, either the people be few in number, and simple apt to be led aside, unable to judge of the sufficiencie of their Minister, or they be more in number, increased in wisdome, sound in faith, and able to discern betwixt things that

differ. In the first sense the election of the people is not necessary or essentiall; But in the second we cannot say he is no Minister that is not chosen by the people, but his calling in that respect is maimed. If the people be few and simple, apt to be deceived, they stand in more need of guidance and direction, both from their own Elders, and other Churches. If the people be many in number, full of wisdome and understanding, their libertie to choose is the greater; and it is the greater wrong to be deprived of it. The practise of the Apostles and the primitive Churches for many ages will confirme this; for sometimes men were propounded to the Church to be chosen: Sometimes the choice was wholly left to them: and was not that for our direction, that more libertie is given where the danger is lesse, and more restraint and caution used where the danger is more apparent, that if they be left to themselves, either an ill or unfit choice will be made? In reason this is evident, for the childs consent is required in marriage, but the more able he is to choose for himselfe, the more libertie may parents grant, the lesse able, the more watchfull must they be; and so in this businesse. Brotherly societie requires that we mutually exhort, admonish, reprove and comfort each other as occasion requires, and as need requires. It is a dutie of Neighbour-Churches to lend their helpe to their brethren in the choice and election of their Minister. When the Scripture willeth that one should admonish another, it is not onely a command to every singular man towards his fellow, but also to any whole company too: another societie *Bellarmine* asketh, *quo jure unus populus Episcopum alterius populi elegere potest? Junius* answereth; *Certe charitatis jure & communione sanctorum.* And *Paul* when he teacheth that all the faithfull are members of one mysticall body of Christ, who ought to have a mutuall care one of another, laid the foundation of this policie.

Rom 15. 14.
Heb. 3. 13.
Bel. de Cler. li. 1. c. 7.
Jun. animad contr. 5. l. c 7. not. 13.
Rom. 12. 12.

It is a blemish in the calling of a Minister, if either the people be not fit to choose, or being fit they be shut forth from the choice, but this maime doth not make a nullitie in his calling; for in every true Church where the word is preached and received, and the Sacraments for substance rightly administred, there is a true and lawfull Ministery, and a true and lawfull calling of that Ministery, though in some things defective. In the Church of God all sound and saving truth is to be found, for it is the pillar and ground of truth, and where the true profession of all saving truth, with the right use of the Sacraments for substance is to be found, there is the Church, which ordinarily cannot be had, maintained and continued without a lawfull Ministery, nor that without a calling. The saving truth of God & a lawfull Ministery, are both essentiall to a true Church. Something of this remaines in every compleat societie that hath any thing of the Church; and for essence and substance they are true in every true, lawfull, compleat societie. The profession of the truth may be true and sound in all necessary

cessary and fundamentall points, though mixed with diverse errors, and the Ministery for truth and substance lawfull, though many wayes deficient. In the true Church there is a true Ministery, but the true Church hath continued there by the blessing of God, where the election of Ministers hath been given away by the people, or taken from them. In the primitive Church, when the people had a voyce in the choice of their Pastor, oftentimes there were factions in the Church, the people stood against their guides and challenged the whole power of election to themselves. Sometimes they were divided among themselves. Sometimes they gave away their power, at least in part, and sometimes Ministers were set over them without their councell and advice, whose Ministery notwithstanding was not reputed voyde and of none effect. If it be objected that many things were amisse in those primitive elections, what will follow thence, but that the Ministery may be lawfull and good, where there be many wants in the manner of calling? If this be not granted, what shall be done when the people and their Elders be divided in the choice of a fit Officer. If the people prevaile against their Elders, he whom they choose is no Minister to them, because not chosen by their suffrages: if the Elders against the people, he whom they approve is no Minister unto them, because not chosen by their suffrage; And so if there be dissention they must seperate from, or excommunicate one another, because he is no Minister to the one whom the others approve. The Orthodox Pastors did professe, so that the *Donatists* would returne to the true and Apostolicall doctrine, they would not disallow their Bishops, that they might understand that Catholiques did not detest Christian consecration (as *Augustine* speakes) by humane error. The high Priesthood was bought and sold for money, and sometimes made annuall, and every yeare new high Priests created, *Sicut isti præfecti quos singulis annis promutant reges*, as *Sol: Jarchi* saith. That as every man would lay out more or lesse money, he should get or lose the Priesthood, which may be seene in the examples of *Jason* or *Menelaus*.

Theod. hist. l. 4. c. 6. Aug Epist. 110. & 225. Socrat. hist. l. 7. c. 34, 35. 39. Zozom. hist. l. 2. c. 18, 19. Nazian. in Epitaphium patris Evagr. l. 2. c. 5. 8. Theod. hist. l. 5. c. 23. Jun. animadver in Bel. cont. 5. l. 1. c. 7. nor. 16, 17. Cartur. reply 2d. part 1. pa. 212. Illiris. catal. test. li. 2. tit. Ecclesiæ gubern.

Nevertheless, so long as the *Jewes* continued the true Church of God, the Priesthood was true also. The reformed Churches who have seperated from the abhominations of *Rome*, professe the first reformers among them received some ordinary calling in the Romane Synagogue. They that thinke the basest of *Rome*, will acknowledge Baptisme unduely administred by Priests or Jesuites, to be for substance the holy Sacrament of Christ. And if the Baptisme of God may be derived from the Ministery, it is no absurditie to thinke

Jos. Antiq. l. 20. c. 18. c. 4. See *Ambros. de officijs. l. 1. c. 50. Hieron. ad Ocean & Epist. ad Nepotian. T. C. Reply 1. pa. 41. a Revet. Cathol. orth. tract. 2. q. 8. Sect. 3. Cartw. Reply 2. par. 1. pa. 273.*

that the first seekers of reformation derived authoritie from Christ to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments by them, as Stewards used of God to set them in that office: for the seekers of reformation derived their authoritie from God, and that which is instituted by Christ, is not made voyde by the corruptions of men.

The third and fourth consideration we will passe over, because from what hath been spoken, it is easie to understand in what sense they may be admitted, and in what denyed, and we have no desire to trouble you with the examination of that which falleth not into question.

As for the second branch of your Answer, that in case the Church shall without cause, or without sufficient weightie cause, rashly or wilfully set him aside whom Christ hath set over them, yet he still remaines a Minister of Christ (untill he accepts of a call from another people) in whose account, notwithstanding such Depositions, he hath true right of administring among that people: We know not well your meaning; if this be your minde that a Minister lawfully called and set over one Congregation, is to be esteemed a Minister in the usuall Church, as the particular Church hath unitie with, and is part of the universall or Catholique: and as a partie baptized is not baptized into that particular Congregation onely, but into all Churches; and that the Ministery is one, *Cujus à singulis in solidum pars tenetur*, as *Cyprian* speakes; and therefore though the Minister be unjustly cast off by one Congregation, yet he is not to be esteemed as no Minister, we freely consent. But if your meaning be that he is onely by right a Minister of that particular Congregation, because unjustly deposed, as formerly in the execution of his office he was a Minister to them onely, and to none other societie whatsoever, or in what respect soever; your opinion is contrary to the judgement and practise of the universall Church, and tendeth to destroy the unitie of the Church, and that communion which the Churches of God may and ought to have one with another; for if he be not a Minister in other Churches, then are not the Churches of God one, nor the Ministers one, nor the flocke which they feed one, nor the Communion one which they have each with other. And if the Pastor derive all his authoritie to feede from the Church, when the Church hath set him aside, what right hath he to administer among that people. If they erre in their deposition, it is true they sinne against Christ. But as they give right to an unworthy man to administer among them, if they call him unjustly, so they take right from the worthy if wrongfully they depose him. The Minister is for his Ministery the office for the execution, and so the Pastor and the flocke are relatives: And therefore if their Election gave him authoritie among them to feed, their casting him off hath stripped him of the same power which formerly they gave him. And his ministery ceasing, he should cease to be their Minister, if he stood as Minister onely to that Congregation in every respect.

Whit. de pont. q. 4. Sec. 10. pa. 559. Certe lex naturæ & ratio clamitat cujus est instituere ejus est destruere, sive destituere, ad quem institutio pertinet ad eundem destitutionem seu destructionem pertinere. Rob. aga. *B. p.* 214. If the Congregation may chuse and elect their Governours, then they may refuse and reprobate them.

VIII. Position.

That one Minister cannot performe any ministeriall act in another Congregation.

Answer.

IF you take ministeriall act improperly as sometimes it is taken by some, onely when the Minister of one Church doth exercise his gifts of praying and preaching in another Church, being by themselves so desired. Then we answer, in this sense a Minister of one Church may do a ministeriall act in another, which he doth not perform by vertue of any calling, but onely by his gifts; and thus upon any occasion we mutually perform those acts one in anothers Churches: But if you meane by ministeriall act, such an act of authoritie and power in dispensing of Gods ordinance as a Minister doth perform to the Church, whereunto he is called to be a Minister; then we deny that he can so perform any ministeriall act to any other Church but his own, becaus his office extends no further then his call. For that solemne charge, *Act.* 20. 28. is not to feed all flocks, but that one flock onely, over which the holy Ghost hath made them over-seers. If the question were propounded to any Minister so exercising in an others Church, which was once to our Saviour by the chief Priests and Elders: *By what power doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authoritie?* let that Minister whosoever he be, study how to make an answer.

Reply.

THe preaching of the Word, publick prayer in the congregation met together solemnly to worship God, and the administration of the Sacraments, are acts properly ministeriall (if any other) to be performed by power and authoritie from Christ, as you acknowledge, for the preaching of the Word, and dispensation of the Seales in your second Consideration. But these acts one Minister may performe in another Congregation, or towards the members of another Church. You know by whom your question hath been propounded touching one Ministers exercising in another Ministers Church, and how it hath been answered; and if you see more light and truth then formerly, we would desire you

To baptise is a duty of the Pastors pastoriall office. *I. D. Apol Ser. exam. pa.* 287.

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you substantially to confute what answers some of you have returned to that demand. *To admit* (saith Mr. *J. D.*) *those that are known members of another Church to Communion in the Sacraments upon fitting occasions I hold lawfull, and do professe my readinesse to practise accordingly.* Again, *I conceive that* (*besides my membership elsewhere, and the right which those Churches give to known passants of being admitted to the Communion for a short time*) *both himself and the whole Church acknowledge me for a member with them for the time of my abode in that service, which they testified by desiring the help of my publick labours, and their cheerfull admittance of me to that ordinance during that time without the least scruple.* And if a Minister may pray, preach, blesse the congregation in the name of the Lord, and receive the Sacrament with them, being thereunto requested; we doubt not but by consent of the Pastor and the Congregation he may lawfully dispense the Seals amongst them also as need and occasion requires.

Exam. of texts, pa. 190.

Apol. exam. of texts. *p.* 288.

That distinction of preaching by office, and exercising his gifts onely, when it is done by a Minister, and desired of none but Ministers, and that in solemne, set, constant Church-assemblies, we cannot find warranted in the Word of truth, and therefore we dare not receive it.

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